THE KINDADVENTURES



STELLAG S PERRY





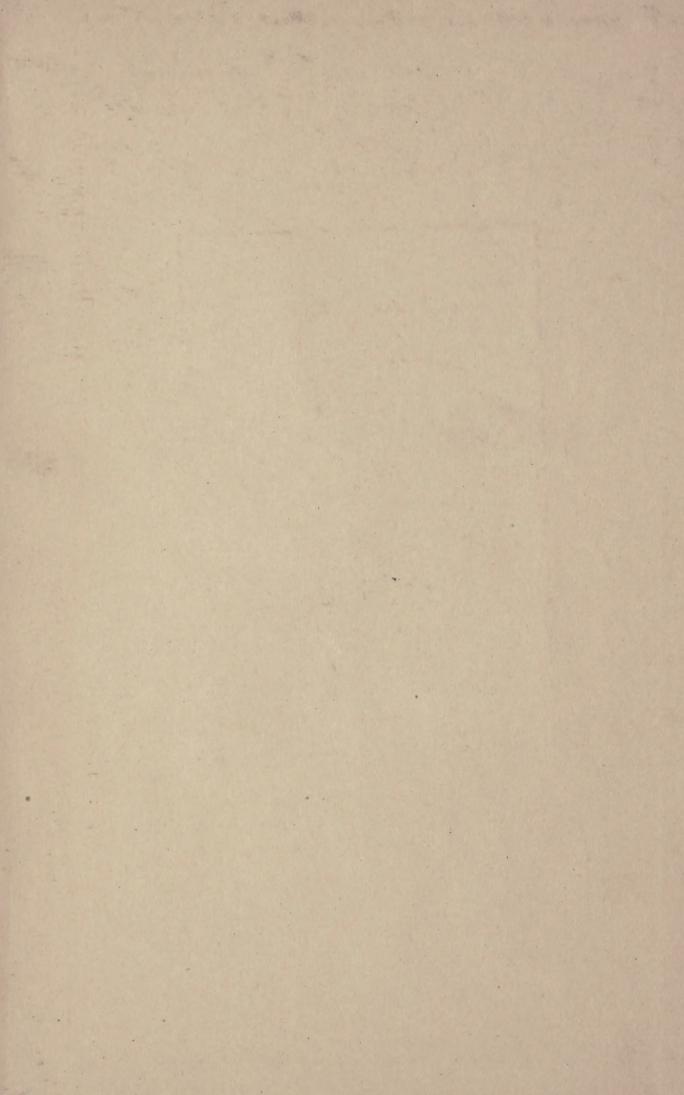


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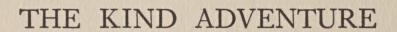
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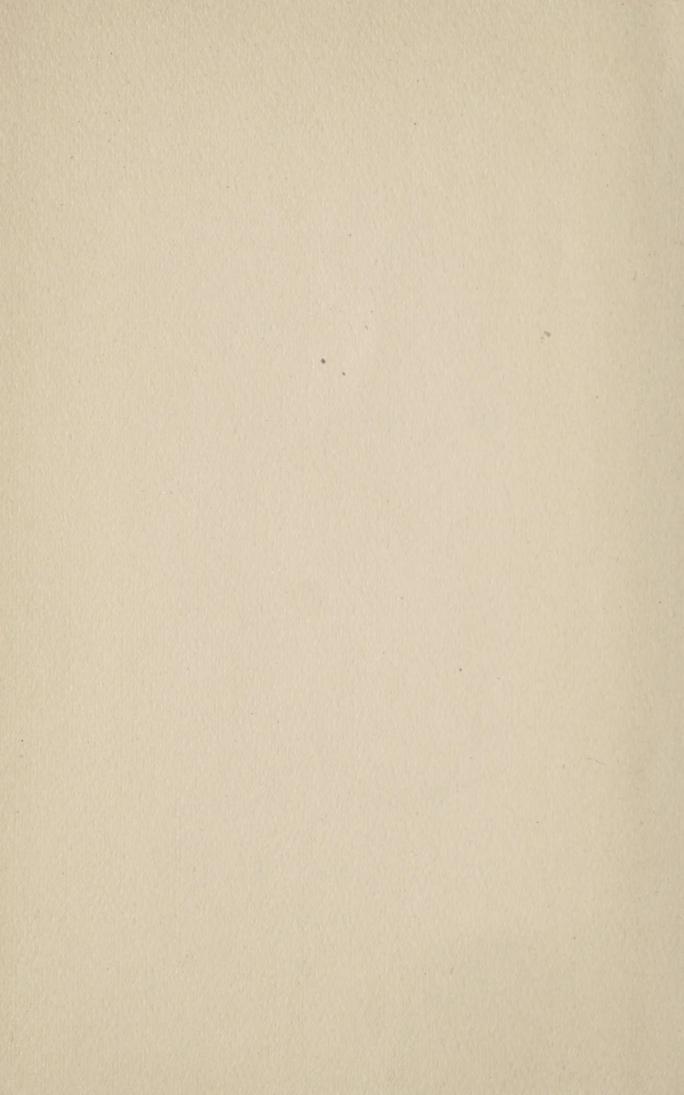
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"THE WOUNDED DEER CAME UP FROM THE BROOK AND STRAIGHT TO HER"— $Page\ 208$ 

# THE KIND ADVENTURE

BY

STELLA GEORGE STERN PERRY
AUTHOR OF "GO TO SLEEP"

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY MARIA L. KIRK AND CARLTON GLIDDEN

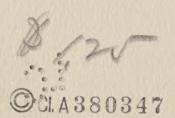


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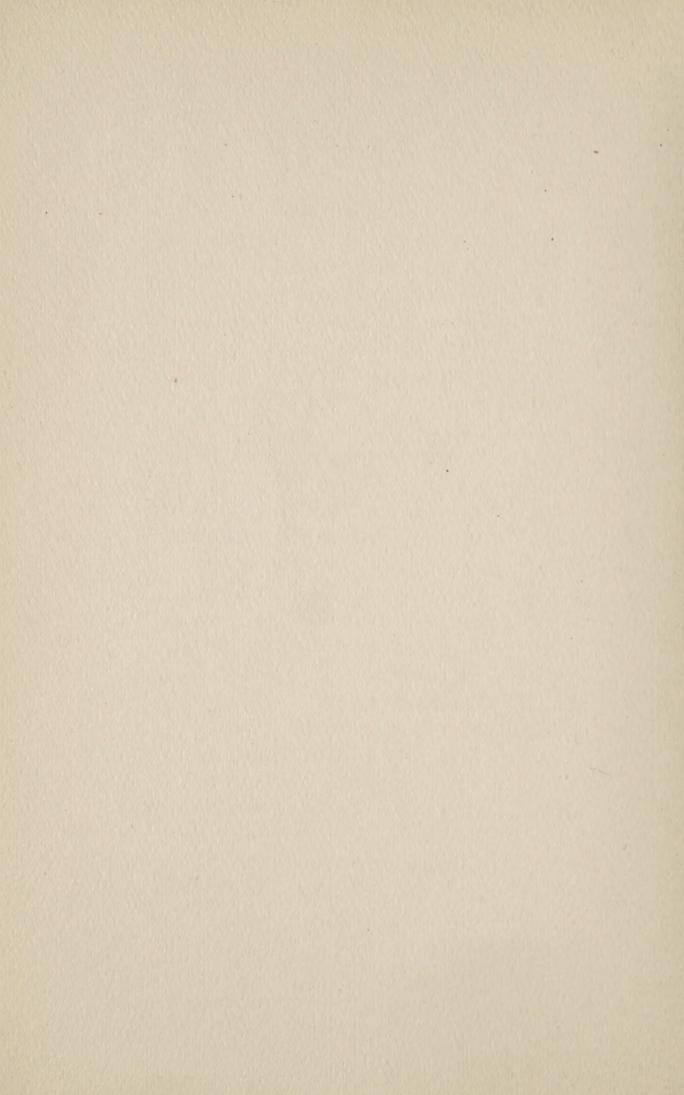


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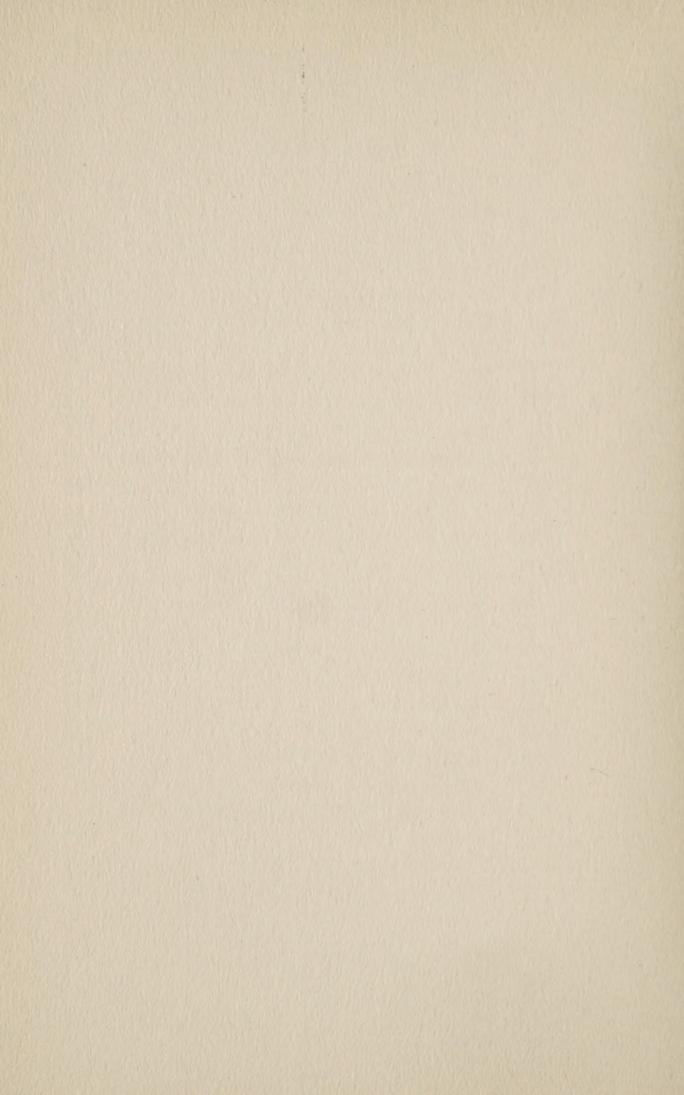
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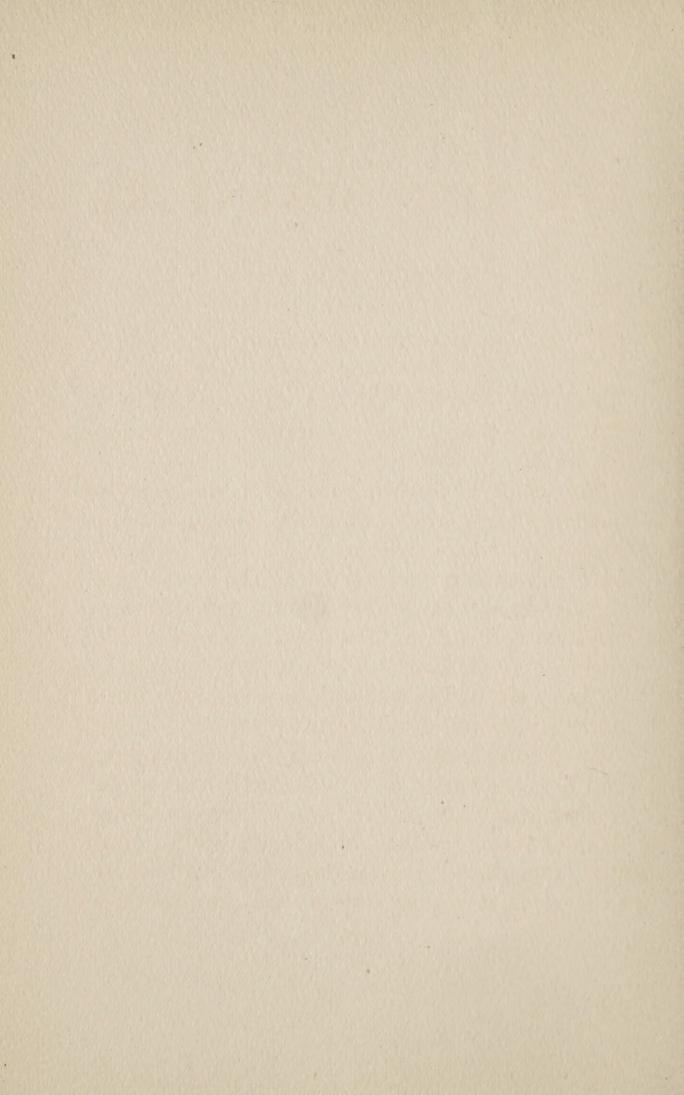
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# THE KIND ADVENTURE

#### CHAPTER I

#### HOW IT ALL BEGAN

BETTY ANDERSON sat on the porch of a little hotel in the mountains writing to her big brother.

She made a pretty picture, with the sunlight flickering through the vines and shining on her black-and-white-check frock and the gay red neckbow and crimson leather belt. You could not see her face, because her brown curls fell forward on each side of it and hid it like two little curtains, as she bent busily over her lap-desk.

But if she had looked up you would have liked

her. Everybody liked Betty.

Her soft brown eyes were full of laughter and her lips turned up a little at the corners as if they wanted to laugh, too. Tiny, twinkling dimples seemed willing to help the mirth. But Betty's laughing eyes were thoughtful and friendly as well; and anyone would feel sure that no unkind or angry words would come through

Betty's merry lips.

Betty was happiest in the country. She loved this little mountain resort as if it were another home; for, although she lived in the city in winter, she was an outdoor girl through and through. She always preferred to sit in the sunniest places. The little hand moving so diligently across the paper was brown as a boy's and the slender wrist looked firm and strong.

Betty was a healthy, hearty young person. She moved quickly, and seldom walked when she could run. Her father said that when Betty went across the meadow he could not tell her from the skimming swallows. And the tips of her shoes were always worn out long before the rest of them.

Nevertheless, there was nothing she liked better than sitting quietly on the porch writing to her big brother, Robert.

For, you see, they were chums and comrades, although Robert was a young man and Betty only a child. "Nothing seems complete," Betty often said, "until I've told Bob about it." And, in the same way, Big Brother Bob felt that he wished to share all his pleasures with her. Therefore many letters passed between them when they were separated, as they were this summer when Rob-

ert was at the seashore and Betty in the mountains.

Now you may read a few of these letters. They will introduce you to Betty and Bob better than any one else can do, and, besides, they will let you see why The Kind Adventure began.

> APPLE TREE INN, July 19th.

DEAR BROTHER BOB,

I hope you are having a good time. We are.

Mother and Father have gone up the mountain—the big one, you remember, that has a weeny little bit of snow lying on the top sometimes, like a white cap with strings. It will take

two days to get up and down.

I am still too little for any use. They say I may climb up, too-when I get bigger. By the way, Brother Bob, how old do you have to get before they stop saying "only"? Once I was "only ten" and last year I was "only eleven" and now I'm "only twelve." You are the only grownup who doesn't say it.

I have gathered you some balsam for a pillow. It is sweet, but dreadful prickly. Father says,

"So is Betty, sometimes!"

Your loving sister,

BETTY.

CAPE WILDWIND, July 23rd.

DEAR BETTINA,

You are quite big enough, Miss. Once I could put you in my pocket and then I could lead you on a string; but now you lead me on a string and soon, I dare say, you will be put-

ting me in your pocket.

"Only twelve," indeed! Why, it seems more than eleven years ago since I last saw Little Mistress Sisterkin as she climbed and kissed her kin with her hair in a curl and her skirts in a whirl and her tongue in a patter and a chatter and a clatter and not a thing the matter with the dearest, queerest girl.

I dearly love balsam and I don't mind prickly

things, if they're sweet.

I am having lots of fun here by the sea. I look 'way over, clear to France—you can't see clear to France but you can look. And I make plans about that voyage we shall take when you are all through college and know so much that one country cannot hold you. I plan all manner of joy for the time

When jolly Betty and sweet Bess And Betsey, strong and true, When gentle Beth, tart Lizzie—yes, Severe Eliza, tooWhen Lisbeth, calm and capable, And Elsie, fair and fond, And winsome, wise Elizabeth Go sailing on the pond.

That will be a shipful!

Say, Bettykins, you haven't forgotten our Giving-Somebody-a-Good-Time compact, have you? You ought not, for you originated it, one very virtuous day. And I like the notion too much to let it go. I mean the promise you and I made to each other that we are each to find somebody, while we're vacationing, to whom our vacation shall give a happier time than would have been possible without us.

We said that we'd write to each other the moment we found the right persons and tell all about our Adventure in Kindness. But, as you have not mentioned yours, I fear you have had no more success than I in finding any.

So far, except to like the idea, I have done nothing.

I'm not giving up hope, though. But this is a hotelful of the happiest people alive, I believe. They laugh and play and like one another; and there are no engaging invalids or cross old ladies or lonely children or spoiled ones or any of the trying but interesting people that there always are in stories. The fishermen and their families and "all the inhabitants of the land," as your Cousin Kate keeps reading out of her Casar's Commentaries, are bright and independent and perfectly content.

So what can a poor reformer do, when nobody wants his wares? I shall hire a hut and put up a notice:

#### CHEERLESS VACATIONERS WHO

#### WOULD BE CHEERFUL

#### APPLY WITHIN.

So thus far, my history is a blank. What is Betty Bountiful's?

Lovingly,

BIG BROTHER BOB.

APPLE TREE INN, July 26th.

DEAR B. B. B.,

I haven't found anybody either. But I had not forgotten.

You see, this is such a wee bit of a camp hotel, 'way back in the woods here, and we have come

every year for so many years that it seems to me we have known 'most everybody forever.

There isn't a single little girl here but me, and at first I was so lonely that I thought I should have work enough trying to cheer up my own vacation. For I didn't have any books with me except Little Women and Alice and The Lady of the Lake, because Father said I could have only three and those must be old friends—so my mind could have a vacation. They think I read too much. Not now! For when you know three books almost entirely by heart, you can't read them many times in a summer even when you love them and haven't any others.

I wanted to look about among the country people—there must be some I don't know—for a b-e-n-e-f-i-c-i-a-r-y. I had to ask Mother how to spell that word and I wrote it down in pieces as she said it. But the grown people kept me so busy holding their worsted and fetching things and running to call their guides and getting flowers for their rooms and singing for them and playing the violin—it is so nice to have Mr. Shiver Strings up here in the woods!—that I haven't had a chance yet to hunt up anybody to help or cheer.

Doing all these things has filled up the time and been lots of fun. But they are just little things that anybody would do; I think you and I meant something very special. Well, maybe there is a lost princess in the woods somewhere.

We have a new guide. He looks like the polar bear in the Park, only happier. He has always lived around here and I shall ask him to-morrow whether he knows a "helpee" for me. Isn't that a lovely make-up word?

Love from us all and buckets from Betty.

## CAPE WILDWIND, July 29th.

BETTY AHOY!

Such news! I have found the loveliest helpees! An interesting pair of old lovers, an old
couple who live just beyond the cove. No honey,
don't take out your pocket-handkerchief to wipe
your streaming eyes. Not a poor old couple who
need help. A rich and jolly old couple who need
it!

Now I can see Betty Bouncer just bouncing up and down in her chair and saying, "How provoking! Why doesn't he tell about it?" So I will from the beginningest beginning.

I was sitting near the beach in the shade of a scrubby little pine-tree that your great monarchs of the forest would pity, on a scrubby little patch of grass that looks like a little rug laid out to dry upon the rocks and sand. And I had a book in my hand, but I wasn't reading; and a pad and fountain-pen in my pocket, but I wasn't writing; and a sketch-book and pencils, but I wasn't sketching. So we must conclude, dear reader, that our hero was loafing on the shore.

And away out over all the sparkle and tilt and fringe of the waves, wee white sails were drifting. Wee white sails, all but one! One was pale lavender and cloth of silver. Is that fairy-

storyish enough for Your Highness?

Oh! You can imagine how I tore to the hotel for my spy-glass. And, sure enough, a lavender and silver sail on the neatest little craft! She looked trim and dapper even 'way out on the rim of the world. So I got into my motor-boat. I know you like sail-boats better than splitter-splutters, but now you will be glad I had a power one. So I got into my motor-boat to follow and find, for well I knew my lot would be hard if I never could satisfy your "'satiable curiosity" as to that fairy boat.

And she was a white boat with a silver band all around her and her name was enameled in purple letters and the name was—O Betty Bess!

—The Violet Dawn!

An old man with a face exactly like the elf-

ish, finely merry Santa Claus pictures—not the too fat, blowsy ones that do not look at all like the children's saint—was sailing the boat. And a beautiful old lady who looked like all good wishes come true was singing to him.

I came as near as I dared. It was so lovely I just couldn't go away. But they didn't think me rude for staying or staring. The old lady smiled sweetly at me and the old gentleman asked if I wished to know anything.

And I said, "Yes, sir; I do—since you ask me. I wish to know all about this beautiful boat and her beautiful name and her beautiful sail. And, do forgive me, but I wish to know about your beautiful selves and the beautiful time you are having." I don't know how I dared; but there was something about them that just made you speak your heart out.

They got quite rosy with pleasure and laughed and laughed and invited me to take tea with them that day at their home beyond the cove and promised that then they would tell me all about it.

And as I drew away from The Violet Dawn, I called out, "I hope you forgive me. But I just felt that we are naturally friends." The dear old lady smiled and called back, "My dear, the whole world should be so!"

That is as sweet and fine a good-night thought

as I know. And it is growing very late. So I'll finish this letter "to-morning," as a wee Betty used to say.—

'Fore Breakfast, but there are crackers and fruit in my room.

Well, when I arrived at the cove I found my new friends waiting on the little landing. The old gentleman was carrying a hamper. They seemed just a shade embarrassed and the old lady said at once, "Oh! I am so sorry we cannot take you to the house. But, if you would not mind—there is a lovely little evergreen grove over there on the point; and here is a hamper with goodies"—she said goodies, Betty,—
"and a vacuum bottle full of cream, and the teacaddy and kettle and all are here, and I'm sure we can have a pleasant time, if you'd just as lief. You see," she went on frankly, "my daughter is having her sewing club and we forgot all about it."

"It's a way we have," laughed the old gentleman. And we all three chuckled together.

"Goodies" was the word for the spread, or maybe "besties" would be better. Plum tarts that the knave of hearts would have been a jack not to have stolen! And home-made peppermint candies! And the crispest lettuce and cress sandwiches! And tea! You see, I put the most important things first.

We became friends forever. And here is the story you have been bouncing with impatience for.

Captain Candor—just the name for him—and his wife came of hard-working fishermen's families. Both had many sisters and brothers. And all the family of both families were the plainest kind of folks. They didn't believe in any "fancy fixings." And they did believe in ugly things that would wear forever. And time spent in reading anything except the necessary school books and the sacred books was, they thought, lost time. And they never waited for anything, but did it at once, whether they needed to or not. They were honest and good. But they had few pleasures and did not care for more or know how to get them out of the world around.

But Peter Candor and Nancy Dale—that was Mrs. Candor in her girlhood, and she must have been the bonniest lass!—were both somehow different. They liked to watch the pretty lights on the water, not to estimate the weather, but because they were pretty. They had a collection of sweet-sounding sea shells. And they took the books of poems out of the Sunday school library

and read them together. And that is the kind they were.

After they were married they had to work terribly hard. The Captain was a fisherman like his father before him. And some of his sisters and brothers and some of hers lived with them. And all the sisters and brothers discouraged any fancy fixings, as they had always done.

The Captain and Mrs. Candor got no encouragement in their dreamings and longings for beauty even from their own children—except one, they said. There seems to be some sad mystery about that one. For they speak of him but little and sorrowfully.

The other children "took after" the aunts and uncles, and the old folks had the old problem all over again. They sent their children to schools and educated them well. Now, their children are all the leading lights of the little village. But they still have no use for anything that is not serviceable.

Of late years they all married, except one daughter—I don't know about the mysterious son of whom they find it so hard to speak. Now that daughter is about to be married. And the summer resort crowd has made the Captain's holdings—he has lots of property hereabout—very valuable; and his other investments during recent

years have turned out well. So they are rich and free and are going to have all the lovely Violet Dawny things at last.

But they don't know where to get them or

how.

Brother Robert to the rescue! Oh, we had a delicious time planning!

We're going to give the sewing club daughter the plain old house and we are going to build a dream of a little one. I drew the first plans that very night for them.

I told them about you and Mr. Shiver Strings, and the Captain said, "I can just see her now, playing her violin in the sunset in that little neck of woods."

Wish I could, Betty Beloved!

Thine, B. B. B.

# APPLE TREE INN, August 1st. You Wonderful Brother,

It is so magic! I do so wish I could be with you and the Captain and especially precious Mrs. Candor. Are any of the children or grandchildren named Nancy Candor, too? I hope not, unless it's a nice one who loves everything and not only poky, stiff things.

I know all about it, for there is a very useful-

minded lady here who asked Mother whether I was never going to get too big to weave daisy garlands. And Mother said, "I hope she never is." And I tremble to think how I'd have felt if she hadn't.

Speaking of garlands—I have a most exciting news, too. I am not surely sure. But I think I'm on the trail of a helpee. Oh! I can scarcely hope it will be a marvelous one like yours. I keep saying to myself over and over, "Betty, please, please don't be disappointed if it's a very ordinary one."

It begins very interestingly—if it has really begun at all.

I asked Joe Silver, the new guide, about the people who live here and told him why I wished to know.

And he thought a long, long time. And then he smiled a long, long time in silence. And I'm afraid that made me bounce dreadfully with impatience.

But at last he said, "Well-maybe."

And I asked, "Oh! What?"

And he asked me, very slowly, "Do you know Primrose Garland?"

I thought such a lovely, flowery name must come out of a book; so I asked, "A person?"

"Then you don't know her," said he.

"Does she need help?" I asked.

"She says not," answered Joe Silver.

Then he said not another word, and I bounced and bounced.

"Please tell me about Primrose Garland," I begged after about a hundred years.

"Wait until you meet her," said Joe, and not

another word.

Isn't it maddening? But I dream about Primrose Garland all the time. Do you think Joe Silver could have made her up? He doesn't look as if he could.

I think I'd better not ask any one else, but wait for Joe Silver to let me meet her. The way he said it seemed kind of promisy.

But I can't wait very much longer.

Give my love to the Candors and tell them I'd play all day for them if I could play beautifully enough.

We all send your love-basket to you.

YOUR BETTY BOUNCE, INDEED.

CAPE WILDWIND, August 3rd. Bouncing Bet,

I read your letter to the Candors and they are delighted about Primrose Garland and feel sure that she is real. Mrs. Candor says to look

for her "on the river's brim, of course." For Wordsworth has fixed it once for all, the proper location of primroses,

A primrose on the river's brim A yellow primrose was to him, And it was nothing more.

But that would be quite enough for us just now, wouldn't it? Wonder if she is yellow? A Yellow Primrose and a Brown Betty!

I went to the plain house where the Candors live now, and the sewing club daughter received me. She is a good, kindly-looking girl and condescends to "humor" her parents in their follies. She has twinges of conscience about accepting the plain house and putting them to the trouble of building a new one. Trouble, Betty! And Mother Candor took the plans to bed with her and slept with them under her pillow!

The new house, the tiny new wonder-house, is to be built of great gray stones, like the boulders on the coast, and the roof is to be deep, sage, soft green, and the wee porch and the broad casement windows are to be trimmed in ivory white to match the sands. The house is to be but one story high, but at the end nearest the water we are to have a little watch-tower of stone so that the sun may be watched all around

the horizon, and the moon and all the stars. And flower boxes under all the windows and porch boxes on the porch! And a rocky garden of trailing things and creeping things that are not afraid of the salt air.

And the sewing-club daughter thinks it will be a trouble to build it!

The site crowns a little hill. There's a grassy slope before it and at one side, and beyond that all the waters between us and Europe; and back of the house and on the other side is the little evergreen grove that extends to the point—and there wild asters and Indian pipes are to be found and many low-bushing wild roses.

A round grandchild, the daughterlet of "our son Richard, the mayor," accompanied us to-day when we examined the lay of the land. A rosy youngster, placid beyond belief! She looks like a plump Cupid walking in his sleep. And that gives me a wonderful idea!

Oh! I must get it into effect at once. Goodbye, Betty dear. Just you wait until my next letter! That will have news in it.

Give my love to Primula Vera if you find her. That's botanical for "Primrose." But by any other name she'd be as sweet.

Look by the river's brim.

Your own, B. B.

#### CHAPTER II

#### A PRIMROSE BY THE RIVER'S BRIM

BETTY sighed a little wistfully as she sealed this morning's letter.

For she had nothing to tell. Primrose Garland had not appeared. There was no sign of her by the river's brim or anywhere else.

Joe Silver, the guide, had not seemed to see the wistful glances that Betty could not help giving him and she did not dare ask him outright. Betty was not at all the type of girl to become nagging and insistent. So she sighed—and waited.

She was as happy as could be that Robert had found "helpees" for his Kind Adventure; but she did yearn for some success to tell him about hers.

"Now, Elizabeth Anderson," Betty said to herself severely, "don't be grumpy. Haven't you all these lovely meadows to play in and hills to climb and brooks to wade in and a dog and two cats to romp with?" She couldn't help laughing as she said that, for she looked down the porch

at the dog and the cats; and they certainly did not seem ready for a romp. The cats were very lazy and sleepy and slick and had no ambition beyond lying in the sun and making their toilets, and the poodle could scarcely walk, he was so fat and old.

Although she truly did not want to, Betty soon caught herself sighing again.

"I wish I could go with the grown-ups to meet Miss Connie," she thought. "Everybody is so excited about Miss Connie's coming."

Betty was considerably excited about Miss Connie's coming herself and had risen especially early this morning to hear all that was said about her and to see all the preparations.

Miss Connie was the granddaughter of Mrs. Althorpe, a very splendid, severe old lady who had been at Apple Tree Inn every summer since Betty could remember. Miss Connie herself had been there, too, years before, when she was not much older than Betty was now. But Betty had been so little then that she did not remember. Miss Connie had been studying in Europe ever since. But she must have been a very nice little girl, Betty thought, because everybody remembered her and loved her. She was not severe and splendid at all, as her grandmother was, they said, but very gay and lovely. They all

called her "Connie" as if she were a little girl still and it seems that she had never forgotten to write to the old friends of her girlhood.

"They're all as bouncy as I ever get, waiting for her," thought Betty. "Oh! But she must be sweet! Why the washwoman cried for joy when they told her Miss Connie was coming. H'm! No matter who ever cries for joy to see me, it will never be a washwoman. I'm so messy with my dresses."

Soon the wagons drove up to the door and everybody crowded into them. Even the people who did not know Miss Connie caught the spirit of those who did. They were all going to drive to Westport to meet her. They had decorated the house wagons and the two carriages gaily with mountain blue-bells and daisies.

Betty had been kept busy running for string and scissors and pins and ribbon. She was so interested that sometimes she felt that she must go, too. But at other times she was glad she was to stay—for there was always the chance of meeting Primrose Garland! Besides, the carriages were so crowded already that fat Mrs. Althorpe really did overflow a little on one side. So Betty felt sure that there was no room for anyone more, even a little girl.

She stood on the carriage block and waved them off.

Just before the last carriage began to move Betty's heart gave a great leap of excitement. For Joe Silver, the guide, went to Mrs. Anderson's side of the carriage and Betty could see that he asked her something and that her mother smiled. She could not hear what Joe Silver asked, but Mrs. Anderson answered very clearly, "Why, certainly, she may. That will be very nice."

Betty tingled all over, for she felt sure that Joe's plan concerned her and she could not help hoping that it had something to do with Prim-

rose Garland.

She stood waiting on the carriage block until the horses turned the corner of the road, leaving only clouds of dust behind them. Joe Silver stood on the other side of the road, smiling the slow, slow smile that took him longer than it took Betty to make a whole speech.

Then he said, "Well, Miss Betty, it looks like they've left you and me."

And Betty said, "Yes."

"What were you planning to do?" asked Joe, very gravely, though his eyes twinkled.

"Why, I haven't planned anything," answered Betty, her heart beating fast with eagerness.

"Because," the old guide went on, "your

mother said you might go for a little walk with me."

Betty opened her eyes wide. Go for a walk with him! Why, Betty knew every little walk about the hotel as well as Joe did himself, as well as any guide in the hills. Joe knew she did not need a guide for a little walk, if that were all. So she felt very hopeful.

But she simply said, "Thank you, Joe."

Joe Silver saw her excitement, though. Betty always said of him, "Joe Silver is very quick for such a slow man." He could see that Betty was bouncing inside, for all her patience and politeness.

So he put up his finger for silence and said, "Sh-h!" and started off, taking long strides.

Betty jumped down off the carriage block and followed him. Her heart was pounding so hard that she thought Joe could hear that, but she said not a word.

He led her over the bridge and through the lane that winds across the meadow and into the leafy, rocky Job Road. This is a steep, high road named Job because years ago there was a quarry near it and some men who worked there used to live on this road to be close to their job. But the people in the hotel used to joke about it and say that the steep, hard road was called Job

because it was such a job to climb it. The grown folks seldom climbed this way, but Betty was used to it and loved it.

Up and up and up they went under the arching trees, until they crossed a meadow where the first little ruined hut stands.

Then Joe broke the silence.

"Sit here a while," said he, "and rest and admire the view."

Betty certainly was surprised. She began to be a little afraid that Joe had taken her out for only a walk after all. She tried to keep her mind on the view to please Joe.

At another time this would not have been hard, because the view from this high meadow was Betty's "favoritest" view in all the world. The mountains seemed to take hands in rings, every ring looking over the shoulders of the one in front of it and all getting bluer and paler and more distant and more lovely.

But this time Betty could not keep her attention upon anything before her; she could only keep waiting and hoping for Primrose Garland. But she stood on the big rock and tried her best to do what Joe had asked her.

After what seemed to Betty a very long time, she turned to see what Joe was doing.

And Joe was gone! He was not in sight anywhere.

"Now, I know it's about to happen," thought Betty; "something must be going to happen now."

But nothing did. Only Joe Silver came back, down the road, and said quietly, "Come on."

Betty could not quite restrain her curiosity then. She could not quite give up hope, either.

"Where have you been, Joe?" she asked.

But Joe only replied, "Up there."

"Not up the road, Joe," said Betty, "for I looked and didn't see you. So you must have gone up the ravine, I guess."

Joe said, "Ye-es?" and started on again.

They followed the road up and up, nearly its whole length to New Pond, it seemed to Betty. She was just making up her mind as to whether she dared ask him if they were really only taking a walk and not going to see Primrose Garland, when she noticed that his shoulders began to make little chuckly shakes. So she thought it best to wait still longer.

Soon they came to the lovely Bosky Dell where the brook just tears along and the forest comes so close and is so tall, and around the stone foundation of the other little ruined hut a funny little shaded lawn is stretched, just as if somebody had made it.

Then Joe stopped and looked at Betty gravely for a while. She looked up at him gravely, too, a-tip-toe with expectation.

At last he smiled his slow smile and said, "Well, now I must be going. Here's somebody to bide with you."

Betty looked around eagerly, but could see no one. And—of all the surprises!—he brought Mr. Shiver Strings, Betty's violin, from under his coat and handed it to Betty and said "Good-by" and started down the mountain.

Betty thought this very queer. She was so puzzled. But she saw that Joe wanted her to play the violin, and she did so, of course, like the agreeable little girl she was. She began to draw the bow gently across the strings, watching Joe with a wondering expression.

Joe turned around and smiled his long, slow smile and stood listening a moment. Then he said, "You plucky little sport!" and went on down the mountain.

When Betty told her father about that in the evening he said that he was quite sure it was the only compliment Joe Silver had ever paid to anyone in all his life.

Betty kept on playing. At first it seemed

strange to be playing in the woods alone. But soon she liked it very much. She played "Come unto these yellow sands," and that made her think of Robert and the Candors.

Then—a dog barked. Some one said, "Hush, Amico!" Betty looked up.

There, on the other side of the stream, was a big, plumy, tan-and-black-and-white collie. He regarded her with bright, calm eyes. The bushes were rustling. They parted and a girl came through.

She was a tall, slender girl, about thirteen years old, in a faded blue gingham dress, and over her shoulders were two ropes of the goldenest hair that Betty had ever seen. Where a sunbeam fell on the top of it it shimmered like a buttercup. The girl had large deep blue eyes and the fairy kind of face that reminded Betty of the angels coming downstairs in a picture in her father's library at home. She was tanned by the sun. She was very shy—Betty could see her holding on to the bushes as if ready to run away.

So wise, kind little Betty kept playing and smiled at her over Mr. Shiver Strings.

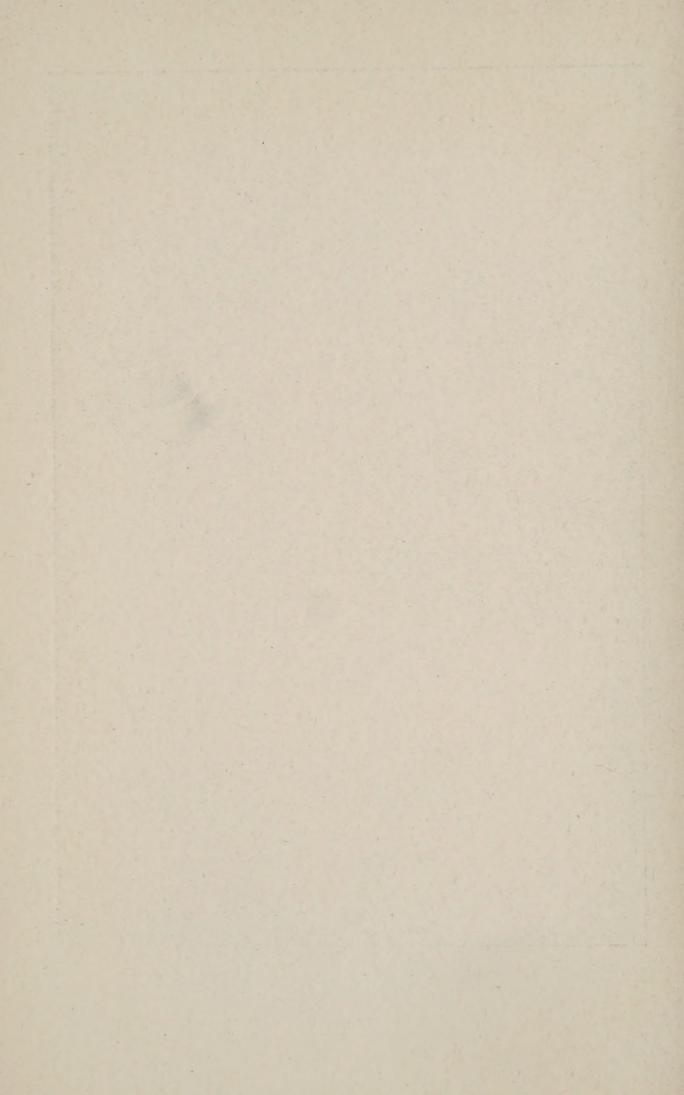
When she saw that the golden-haired girl did not run away, but had let go of the bushes and was smiling at her, too, Betty stopped playing and said, "How do you do? I am Elizabeth Anderson-Betty."

And the other girl replied, "I am Primrose Garland."

Betty had found her!



"THE GOLDEN-HAIRED GIRL DID NOT RUN AWAY, BUT WAS SMILING" -Page 27



# CHAPTER III

### **GETTING ACQUAINTED**

BETTY ran forward to the brink of the brook. She cried out happily, "Oh! I'm so glad! I was just perishing to meet the girl with that lovely name."

Primrose smiled shyly and said, "I'm glad, too,

Betty."

Then she patted the big dog and added, "This is Amico."

Betty said, "He is perfectly lovely. I'm sure I'm happy to meet Amico, too."

Amico waved his plumy tail and seemed to

know that he was being talked about.

Primrose came across the stones and Amico came right through the stream beside her. They all sat down on the "lawn" together. Amico kept his calm, bright eyes set on Betty, as if trying to make up his mind whether to approve of her as a companion for his little mistress. Betty smiled at him and Amico came nearer to her and

lazily wagged his tail in contentment. Even he was won by Betty's bright, heartsome smile.

Betty was a little afraid that it was going to be hard to talk to Primrose without asking ever so many questions. For, of course, she wanted to know all about her; and she knew it was in bad taste and rude to be inquisitive about the affairs of others. But Primrose knew that Betty must be bursting with curiosity, so she told as

much as she could right away.

"Joe Silver told me you would come," Primrose began. "He has been telling me about you for days and days. I didn't dare meet you at first. I was shy. You see, father and I live alone 'way up the mountain here. And father does not wish to see anyone at all except just the few country folk that we know well. So I never see people, either—and Joe Silver says it has made me much too shy. Joe thinks I should have playmates. He is always letting us see that he thinks so. I don't have any playmate at all, except Amico." Primrose placed her hand lovingly on the big dog's head and Amico looked up at her devotedly. "Joe said he wanted me to know you. I couldn't say I would until I had a peep at you one day through the trees when you were gathering everlastings on Pennyroyal Peak." Here Betty quite jumped to think that Primrose had

been so near and she had not known it. "Then," Primrose went on, "I was sure I'd love you, Betty, and not be shy at all. But Joe was afraid I'd be timid when the time came, so he said that he would have you come up here and play the violin and when I heard it I should come down the ravine trail and look at you well and see whether I wanted to come out of the bushes. And I did, the moment I saw you, Betty!"

"Well," Betty said, "I'm glad of that. For Joe told me about you, too. Only he didn't give me any peeps at you. He wouldn't even say for certain whether you were real or a person out of a book. And I was just bouncing all the time. My big brother calls me Betty Bounce," she explained, "because I always do bounce when I'm terribly curious or impatient. I thought I just couldn't wait another day to meet you. You see, there isn't another girl at the hotel but me."

Betty was going to add, "And I was sometimes very lonesome," but she felt that that was hardly the right thing to say to a girl who never had any playmate but her dog.

Of course, Betty wondered why Primrose's father did not want to see people and why Primrose had to stay on the mountain all the time, for it was plain to be seen that Primrose was dif-

ferent from the other country people round about.

But the only question she asked was, "Don't

you have any lessons, Primrose?"

"Oh! Yes, indeed! Every day—from Father. My father knows everything, Betty. He is the most wonderful teacher. I never went to school except in Philadelphia when I was little——"Primrose began and then stopped suddenly and blushed as though she had said too much.

Then Betty and Primrose began to compare notes as to what studies they liked and how far they had advanced in each. Primrose preferred English and history just as Betty did—and that was a tie between them. Betty soon shared Primrose's opinion of her father as a wonderful teacher when she found, to her surprise, that this little mountain girl was "miles" ahead of her in every subject.

"Even in mathematics!" said Betty. "Though you say you hate it! But, then," she went on laughingly, "I'm not very fond of it myself."

"I truly hate it," said Primrose with a little grimace. "But I have to work hard at it just the same, for father thinks mathematics very important. I always tell him, though, that as soon as I'm of age I'm going to stop counting and not count or calculate another thing as long as I live.

And if people should cheat me, I'd rather be cheated than vexing my soul with numbers."

Betty laughed.

"I think that is a great idea!" she said approvingly. She was wondering about Primrose's expression, "vexing my soul with numbers." It seemed so grown-up and "booky" for a little girl.

But Betty soon found out that Primrose used many strange "booky" expressions. That was because of the books she read. All of Primrose's books were quite grown-up ones—lovely poems, most of them. When Primrose told her their names, Betty thought they sounded like reading off the titles on the top shelf of the poetry bookcase in her parents' library at home. How astonishing it was to meet a little girl who had read ever so much Shakespeare and had never read Little Women! It was no wonder that Primrose talked differently.

However, she seemed like any other little girl when they took off their shoes and stockings and waded up the dancing little brook, laughing as the cold spray sprinkled them. It did this very often, as Amico, gaily barking, darted around them, waving his wet tail.

Primrose knew every nook of the brook and showed Betty where the big trout took his nap and where the moss was silver and where the best wintergreen berries grew and the cresses.

"I'm interested in the cresses," said Betty, "I like cress very much. We have the finest bunches down at our hotel! But they're almost too pretty to eat."

"Yes; they are so bright green and large and pretty," said Primrose and laughed.

"Why-how do you know, Primrose?"

"I gather them!"

"Really?"

"Yes. Our kind Joe Silver takes them down to the hotel for me. The hotel people are always glad to buy my cresses, although there are many right in their own brook; because I know where to find the largest and crispest."

"Oh! Will you show me, Primrose? And let

me help? I'd love to."

"Surely, if you wish. And I get sassafras root and wintergreen, too, and Joe sells them for me to a manufacturer in Albany. You may help find them, too, if you wish—though it is hard to find the sassafras."

"I'd just love to, Primrose. May we find them together?—Why, Primrose, dear, what is the matter?" For suddenly Primrose looked almost as if she were going to cry.

She smiled immediately, though. "Nothing,

Betty. Only it seemed so sweet to have some one to be with me. I think I did not know that I was lonesome, but I was. Now, we must not stay too long in the cold stream. Come; let us rest upon this bank."

When Primrose said, "Come; let us rest upon this bank," Betty almost pinched her to see if she was a real little girl or just a character out of some book, after all.

It made Betty think of Brother Robert and the lovely verse he often said,

"I know a bank where the wild thyme grows."

There was no wild thyme on this bank, but lovely deep green lichens, jeweled with spray and gilded with sunshine. And at its foot was a tiny, splashy whirlpool.

Primrose said, "Hush! And hear Undine laugh!" And when you hushed you could! The splash and ripple sounded just like a fountainfairy's laugh, deep under the water.

The children listened, silent, except when an occasional laugh of their own bubbled forth to meet Undine's. The forest voices, the singing birds, the humming insects, the drumming partridge, the busily munching chipmunk and Mr.

Woodpecker hunting his breakfast, all sounded in sweet, clear chorus.

Primrose clutched Betty's hand and pointed upward.

"Look!" she whispered.

A big, black hawk was circling above them, was swooping down into the trees.

"I must warn the little birds," said Primrose.

And then—Betty said it was "the wonderfullest thing" she had ever seen—Primrose put back her head and whistled a cry exactly like a frightened robin, and all the birds cried out in the same startled way and fluttered about, calling to one another to look out—look out. The hawk must have seen it was no use, for he screamed and flew away.

Betty fairly squealed for joy.

"Oh, Primrose! How can you do it? Oh! It is wonderful, Primrose!"

Primrose was encouraged by Betty's praise to show her all the songs her woodland life had taught her. She rippled like the brook and sang like the thrush and warbled like the meadow-lark and called and "piped and cheeped and twittered" and even made a little rustling, puffing noise like the breeze in the tree-tops. She chirped and trilled until the birds themselves got started and made the woods ring with a sweet ecstatic chorus.

"Oh!" cried Betty. "It is the loveliest thing I ever heard. Who taught you to sing like the birds?"

"Why, they did. But it isn't wonderful, Betty. It isn't nearly so hard as learning to play the violin, I am sure."

"Why, Primrose, I can't begin to do with Mr. Shiver Strings what you can do with your throat. It fooled the birds—they nearly sang their heads off!"

"Where did you learn to play—Mr. Shiver Strings? Such a funny name!" asked Primrose.

"I learned at school. Robert made the name. I wish you could see my big brother. He's at the seashore now. He named the violin Mr. Shiver Strings on account of what I said long ago before I learned to play. I was taking piano lessons when I first began to go to school. I was little, you see. I did pretty well-nothing extra. And one day, while I was waiting for my lesson, one of the big girls was playing the violin. She played beautifully, and I had never heard a violin before, except in orchestra at the theater. Something inside of me seemed to say, 'You can do that, Betty. That's exactly what you'd love to do.' So I went to the big girl, when she was through playing, and asked her to let me hold it a little while. I wanted to have it in my hand.

And I said, 'Oh, the dear, quivery, shivery strings! I wish I could play you. It hums and sings,' I said. And the teacher heard me—the head music teacher of all. And he said, 'No more the piano for you, Miss! Shivery Strings is your instrument. Go say to your mother that Herr Frankle says you are to be a violinist.' So I went home and I said, 'Mother, dear, I love Shiver Strings and Herr Frankle says I am to be a violinist.' So then I got my dear fiddle and I've had him ever since."

"Are there many girls in your school?" Primrose asked with just a little longing in her voice.

"Lots. Do you want to know about them?"

Primrose said eagerly that she surely did, she wanted to know about everything that Betty did.

So Betty told her about the big school on Central Park West and her classmates and friends and the club that met at Betty's house on Saturdays and the skating in the Park, and Primrose made her tell more and more.

But all of a sudden she began to cry and said, "I'm just a wild thing, Betty. You will not care for me."

Betty hugged her and kissed her and told her that she was the prettiest and most interesting girl she ever, ever met and that she loved her dearly already. So Primrose kissed her, too, and said she was sorry for her "idle tears."

Soon Primrose said she had to go to her father and Betty said she had better hurry back to the hotel or she would be too late for lunch. They planned to meet often and often and made happy engagements enough to fill at least three long summers.

"Will you promise, Betty, dear," Primrose asked, "not to tell anyone at the hotel about me, except your parents? And ask them not to tell anyone either? My father doesn't wish to have the hotel guests coming here. He wished me to exact that pledge of you."

Of course, Betty promised. But when she had kissed Primrose for good-bye and started down the Job Road with Mr. Shiver Strings, she shook her head sadly, wonderingly.

Why did Primrose have to stay up on the mountain, winters and summers? Why could no one know about her or come to see her? Why was she so poor that she gathered and sold roots and cresses?

Betty thought it was all very "puzzly."

But—oh!—she was glad she had found her. She loved Primrose Garland.

The wagons had returned when Betty reached the hotel. The first person she saw on the porch

was a small, dainty, pretty young lady who ran up and down talking eagerly to everybody.

"That must be Miss Connie," thought Betty.

As soon as she came near enough to see her clearly, "She is lovely," Betty continued. "I can see why everybody was glad she was coming. She has the smilingest dimples I ever saw." And that was just what some people thought about Betty's own dimples.

Betty ran to her mother and whispered joyously, "It was Primrose! I found her!" and Mrs. Anderson gave her a delighted little squeeze

and said, "I'm so glad, dear!"

"Where's father? I must tell him, too."

"In a minute, Betty. Come meet Miss Connie, now."

Betty made her curtsy to Miss Connie politely. But Miss Connie's eyes softened prettily and she said, "But I want a kiss, Betty. Mayn't I have

a kiss?" So Betty gave her a good one.

"She's just dear," she said to her mother as they went together to find father. "I feel as if I had seen her before, but, of course, I can't really remember when I was a baby. I'm sure I'd be raving about Miss Connie if she had not come at the same time as my darling Primrose Garland."

When Betty had climbed on her father's knee and told him all about it, she said, "Now I must

find Joe and thank him before I eat my luncheon or do another thing."

Betty found Joe Silver on the rear porch, by the spring box, just putting down the dipper.

She knew he didn't like much talking, so she just said, "Thank you" to him. But she said it with her whole heart.

"H'm!" said Joe. "Is it any great favor to put together what belongs together?"

Betty answered, "Maybe not."

Joe said, "Well, then, don't thank me."

Betty did not know just what to say to that, for she did thank him, a billion mountains of thanks. So she stood looking at him rather puzzled; and he stood looking soberly at her, until his shoulders began to shake and a little chuckle came 'way deep in his throat.

"You're welcome," said Joe Silver and went into the kitchen.

After luncheon Betty sat on the porch in her favorite sunny corner and wrote her glorious news to Robert. She was so happy and had so much to tell that she did not know where to begin. She said it was her "joyousest" letter.

"Mother, dear," she said happily, looking up from her lap-desk, "I feel just as I did when I cried at the three-ring circus because it was impossible to see all there was to see, and then Brother Bob promised to take me three times and let me watch one ring at a time.—But won't dear old Bobbles be glad!"

# CHAPTER IV

# NEPTUNE'S PAGEANT

CAPE WILDWIND, August 6th.

HAPPY SISTERLING,

Hurrah for you! We are all so glad you have found your Primrose. And by the river's brim, as Mother Candor predicted. Well, by the brook's brim, then. But in the Adirondacks all the brooks are rivers—or, at least, I know well that all the streams they call rivers are really little brooks.

A yellow Primrose, too! And such a sweet one! Joe Silver is a guide, indeed. Any guide can lead you to good fishing and hunting, but here's a guide who led my girl to Happiness.

If I were you I'd lend Little Women to my Primrose. I'm sure she would enjoy turning some of Miss Alcott's flesh-and-blood little lasses loose among the poetic heroines she has been filling her mind with. Not that they are not charming, too.

And—now—let me tell you what we have been

a-doing.

When I called little Lucy Candor a Cupid in my last letter to you, I saw the glimmering waves at the same time; and that reminded me of the loveliest of sea fairy-stories and gave me the dandiest idea for the Candors.

The ancient Greeks used to think that Aphrodite, Cupid's mother, the Goddess of Beauty, arose from the foam of the beautiful sea. And that is the key to this puzzle.

I gathered a group of sympathetic souls about me, at the hotel, and told them a little bit about the Candors and unfolded my plan. They all took fire at once with enthusiasm—as you will, too, when you hear about it.

First, by moonlight, that very evening, six of the prettiest girls at the hotel arrived outside of the Candors' cottage. They had decorated their white dresses with seaweed and those who had pearl or coral necklaces wore them, and all swung ships' lanterns—red, green, and white—hung with seaweed, too.

They stood just before the door and called out, "Cap'n Candor and Lady, Ahoy!"

The rest of us watched in the shadow. I wish you could have seen the dear old people's delighted wonder.

The Captain was quite speechless, but the little lady said, "Why, good evening, my dears. How sweet you look, to be sure."

Then Cousin Kate stepped forward and dropped on one knee before them and lifted up a great pink-lined shell with a note lying in it.

We got the shell off of the hotel parlor mantel-piece and had to give the proprietor a thousand oaths that we would not break it. As if a whole seaful were not at his garden gate!

Mother Candor took the note, all in a flutter. We had filled the envelope with sand and tiny shells which fell out as she opened it. The letter that she read said:

# MONARCH OF THE OCEAN COMMANDS YOUR PRESENCE ON THE BEACH JUST BELOW THE POINT ON AUGUST FIFTH IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SET OF SUN TO WITNESS A GREAT SEA PAGEANT

The girls crowded round the Candors and held their lanterns high that the message might be read by their light. The Captain read it aloud over his lady's shoulder. A prettier sight never was in this world. One by one the girls curtsied and stepped backward without a word. Then they took hands and went away swinging their lanterns and singing "Baby's Boat's a Silver Moon," while the Candors hugged each other in rapture.

All the next day I kept away from the Candors' house, except just for a little while in the morning, when we had a meeting with the builder of the new home. I never could be "strange and mysterious" and I could not keep my anticipation of the delight in store from showing, I knew. And all yesterday I stayed around the hotel, busy with preparations for the pageant.

Aunt Sadie and Cousin Kate were trumps and emptied out everything we needed from their little cottage—including the very tiny Sadie and the chubby twins. Of course, you want to know what we needed them for. Ah! Just wait and see, Miss Bouncer.

We were all busy every minute, for just as soon as we got one splendid scheme completed, some very bright person would think of a better one.

It was a cloudless day, but Aunt Sadie kept giving us great jumps of anxiety by going to the window and calling out disheartening fears of rain before night.

But how could we have bad weather, with Neptune himself on our side? Anyway, it did not rain, but was a spangly night. The sort of sunset and moonrise that always make me think of Robert Louis Stevenson's gentle expression, "The night fell, lovely in the extreme. The heaven was a thing to wonder at for stars."

All the "audience" went early to the Point and waited. Captain and Mrs. Candor went early, too, you may be sure. Everybody rose when they arrived and conducted them to the big matting cushions which we had spread upon the high flat rock—the place of honor.

We had a boatful of stage "properties" and supplies hidden behind the Point and more concealed in the little grove. Everything was ready.

While the last daylight was yet in the sky, the pageant began.

First you could hear squeals of delight and young cries of laughter coming nearer and nearer; and two dozen little boys in blue-and-white silk bathing tights came splashing around the Point. Some were swimming and others were wading in water above their knees, along the edge of the beach. Many of the little chaps had great conchshell horns to blow upon. They swam about and splashed and splattered one another with water. Some little fat ones along the edge rolled over

and over. Others came up farther on the sand and played leap-frog and turned somersaults, while those farther out swam little races. They were the merriest water-babies imaginable.

Suddenly they all screamed. For a larger body of older fellows, each with a cap representing a dolphin's head, came chasing the water-babies up on the sand. There they made friends and both bands together danced a weird dance to the music of mandolins and guitars.

By that time it was quite dusky and the committee went about lighting paper lanterns that hung on strings between poles.

Out of the grove a song arose. Then came, like a troop of fairies, a troop of little girls in white dresses hung with shells and starfish and pieces of net and floating scarfs of white, seafoam green and palest coral pink, each carrying in her hand one of the star-like electric sparklers that children use at safe Fourth of July parties. They tripped along, singing:

Rarest of pearls,
Good little girls—
Prettiest corals their smiling lips—
Dance like the ocean
In gracefullest motion,
While tresses float light as the fairy ships.

Loveliest lasses,
In Old Neptune's glasses,
We see ourselves brighter than his bright star,
For he has no treasure,
Can give so much pleasure
As good little girls, as we trust we are.

While they were dancing and singing, a line of rowboats and canoes came silently around the watery "stage" with lanterns to keep it alight; though, in fact, the moon was so bright they were scarcely needed.

Then appeared, in the long stream of moonlight, all the best swimmers, men and women, in the place. The men wore crowns of sharks' teeth—imitation ones—and the young women had their hair hanging loose and long strings of bright colored glass beads tied in it. All the bathing suits were covered with seaweed and grasses. They had races and dived from an improvised diving board and swam in figures like a cotillion. Then they joined the dancers and singers on the shore—and sneaked quietly off to the bathing houses to get dry.

And then—down the swath of light came The Violet Dawn. It was drawn in by the dolphins, with long tow-ropes hidden by violets. The Violet Dawn was piled high with a bank of violets,

real ones. In the bow sat wee Sadie as a waterelf and on each side was one of the fat twins as a Cupid. Mother Candor said, "Oh! The darlings!" when she saw them and everybody agreed with her. Standing in the boat, in his splendid jeweled robe of state, very gorgeous with his long green hair, his forked scepter and his crown of coral and pearl and amber, was great King Neptune himself. You would never suppose that our jolly Uncle Jack could look and act with such impressive dignity.

Neptune sang a rollicking sea-ditty, known to the sailors hereabouts, and then, in a loud voice, cried out, "Aphrodite, I bid thee rise! Here are thy little Loves. Here is the violet dear to thee, high in honor. Here is the fairest of moons. And the most beautiful of lovers are the guests we have gathered to delight. Queen of Love and Beauty, arise!"

All this time a float had been in the shadow behind a dark curtain. The float was towed in by swimming water-babies and dolphins. As it reached the bright lighted space the curtain was dropped to the floor—black-carpeted—of the float and a young girl, the beauty of the hotel, rose from the floor, first to one knee, then gradually to her feet. It looked exactly as if she rose from the water. She was clad in Grecian draperies,

snowy white, and as she opened her arms long streams of tinsel fell from them like dripping water. She wore a crown of violets.

She and Neptune sang to each other and to the Candors and to the audience, the mandolins and guitars accompanying them very gently and the little fairy girls dancing along the sands softly and slowly to the music. It was very charming, and Mother Candor and the Captain held hands and opened their eyes wide with joy like two happy children.

Then Neptune invited the whole party to a mammoth driftwood fire and clam-bake on the other side of the Point. The musicians led the way toward it. The audience followed and the performers hurried back to the hotel and cottages to be reclad and get back to the Point as soon as possible.

You know what a beauteous thing a driftwood fire is; and maybe something about the joys of a clam-bake, too, if my memory serves me well. Well, these were the best of their kind. I leave your bright imagination to tell you of the jollity and fun.

Captain and Mrs. Candor were the most enraptured people on any coast. They hugged me and Aphrodite and Neptune and all the waterbabies and as many of the others as they could, and took the twins and wee Sadie on their laps and cried for joy, and were, all in all, the bulliest reward that ever came to a surprise party.

Ah! Naught was lacking but Betty-Dear-My-

Soul.

When I said "Good-night" on the Candors' porch, Mother Candor snuggled close and whispered, "You are like our John, my dear boy." And the Captain, overhearing, said gravely, "So I think," and held out his hand to me. And there were tears in their smiling eyes.

John is the son about whom there is some sad mystery. What is it, I wonder? How I wish I

could make it all "come happy" for them!

But I must not sadden this gay letter that has made my girl jump and shout for pleasure.

Good-night to you, Twinkle Toes!

Your B. B. B.

### CHAPTER V

### MUCH JOY AND A LITTLE TROUBLE

A CROSS the lawn in front of Apple Tree Inn, Betty's mother and father were sitting in a shady little out-door room built around the roots of the big maple tree. Mrs. Anderson was sewing and Mr. Anderson was reading to her.

His voice stopped in the middle of a paragraph and Mrs. Anderson looked up inquiringly. He was smiling and, as her glance followed his,

she smiled, too.

"Here comes a streak of lightning," said Mr. "Nothing else moves so quickly. Anderson. Does she really fly, do you think?"

"Bob calls her Twinkle Toes," Mrs. Anderson replied, "but she moves so fast you can scarce-

ly see even a twinkle."

Betty was darting across the lawn toward them,

waving a letter over her head.

"I've been with the cart for the mail," she said breathlessly. "This is the only letter for us. It's mine, from Bob. Oh! It's the darlingest letter! I read it driving home. Please read it. Will you read it now, and let the book wait, Daddy? Do you mind? For I'm going up to Primrose's—please, mother, may I? Thank you!—and I want to read it to her when you've done with it."

"Of course, I'll read it now, Magpie. Sit here beside me and try to draw a few quiet breaths while I do," and Mr. Anderson held his little daughter close, with one arm, while he read the letter aloud.

But Betty could not keep very quiet while the sea pageant was being described, even though she had read it all, driving home.

"Isn't that lovely?" and, "Isn't he the dandiest brother?" and, "Can't you just see it, Daddy?" and, "O Mother, how cunning Saidee and the twins must have looked!" and, "How could Robert have had such a glorious idea!" and, "Isn't it perfectly heavenly that we are both having such luck with our helpees?" she kept exclaiming.

Her father and mother were almost as enthusiastic as Betty herself. They were young-hearted people and always entered with delight into their children's pleasures. So Betty and her parents lived over the Candors' sea pageant as they read Bob's letter together, so far away in the hills.

"Mother," Betty asked anxiously when her father had finished reading the letter, "do you think it is all right for me to read Bob's letter to Primrose? She would enjoy hearing it so much! But I know you don't think people ought to read other people's letters to other people—What's the matter?" For Mr. and Mrs. Anderson could not help laughing aloud at Betty's funny sentence.

"Surely, you may," Mrs. Anderson answered when she could. "I am glad that my little girl is careful, for a letter is usually a confidence and ought to be respected. But I am sure that Robert would be glad to have you share this beautiful description with your little friend. Run to her, now, my dear. I know you are eager to go; and father wishes to finish his chapter, too."

So a happy Betty gave her good-bye kisses.

"I'm going back to the porch first," she said. "Little Women and Alice are there. I'm going to lend them to Primrose. Good-bye! Goodbye!" and she darted away.

"Bettinka!" her father called. "Slow up a little bit or you will be winded and tired before you

get up the mountain."

Betty tried, but she could not go very slowly and her parents smiled as they watched her gathering the books under her arm and starting off so gaily. "Rather strange and romantic—Betty's goldenhaired girl in the forest," said Mr. Anderson.

"Why, it seems so to Betty," his wife replied, "but I suppose we shall find, after all, that Primrose is just the child of some queer, poor fellow who likes to live like a hermit. They must be safe acquaintances for Betty, or Joe Silver would never have taken her there. At least, it makes the days much more interesting for Betty. I was beginning to fear that she would have rather a dull summer. Look! She is almost across the meadow already, just vanishing under the trees."

Betty wished she could really fly, she was so eager to tell Primrose about the pageant. She hoped Primrose would be on the lookout for her, so that she would not have to wait.

She turned eagerly upward toward the ravine. For Primrose had promised to watch from the big rock that looked down upon the hotel and, if she saw Betty start across the meadow toward the Job Road, to hurry down and meet her in their ravine.

But when Betty reached the ravine she saw nobody there but a busy woodpecker who stopped boring for a minute to look at Betty sideways to see if she were dangerous. He seemed satisfied and turned again to his luncheon. Betty sat on a stone to wait.

She watched the flashing little brook go in and out of the flecks of sunshine and the midges hanging over it in little flickering clouds. She listened to a big frog who kept saying, "Gr—ump! Grump!" in a deep bass voice.

Suddenly the frog stopped croaking and be-

gan to giggle!

"Primrose! You rascal!" Betty cried, and Primrose and Amico came from behind a little cliff of stones.

"I had so much trouble to keep Amico from running out to greet you," laughed Primrose, "and I had to hold his mouth closed to keep him from barking his welcome. I almost spilled the blue-berries several times."

Primrose had brought a pail of blue-berries, bigger and finer than any that Betty had ever seen. They divided them, using big leaves for plates, and ate them while Betty read aloud her wonderful letter.

Primrose loved the sea party as much as Betty had hoped. She clasped her hands with pleasure and her eyes fairly glowed. She said it was like a beautiful dream come true.

"O Betty!" she said. "I love to think of the

little girls in white, holding sparkling things and

dancing over the sand in the twilight."

"So do I," said Betty; "I can't get over them. I'm sure I shall be seeing them all the spare thinking time I have. Don't you love the swimming boys and the dolphins, too?"

"Of course. But, you see, Betty, I cannot imagine that part as well as you can. For I have

never seen the sea."

"Never seen the sea, Primrose!" It seemed very strange to Betty, who had learned to swim almost as soon as she had learned to walk. She opened her eyes so wide that Primrose laughed.

"No," said Primrose. "Father says he is sorry. He hopes I may see it some day. He says that, if I do not, I will have a blind spot in my imagination. I don't know what he means exactly."

"I think I know," said Betty. "You will understand, too, when you have seen it, Primrose."

"Do you think it is lovelier than the mountains?

I do not see how anything can be lovelier."

"Oh, no! Only different. And sometimes when you are on the top of a mountain and there are clouds all below you, it looks a little like a sort of fairy sea. But you will surely see it some day and then you'll love it; I know you will. I've brought two of my favorite books for you, Primrose. I hope you will like them. But I'm pretty

sure you will, because everybody enjoys Alice in Wonderland, and I don't know a single girl who isn't just crazy about Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy."

"Jo! Is that a girl's name?"

"Yes."

"Jo! What a dear, funny little name for a girl!"

"Why, Primrose! That's just what Professor Bhaer says in the book. Now, you must read it. Jo is my favorite—almost everybody's. But some girls like one of the others better. They are all perfectly darling."

"Can we not read it now—together? Father and I read together often. Last night we read The Princess until I had to go to bed."

"Well, Jo isn't a bit Princessy," laughed Betty. "You'll see. I'd love to read it with you."

Then, sitting on the bank of the quiet mountain stream, the two little girls took turns reading aloud. They read that lovely first chapter that is like opening the door and entering the March household, where peace and love and simple, daily strivings to do right make us feel ourselves to be in such good, friendly company.

Primrose said that Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy were "realler than people." So they are; but they must have seemed still more so to Primrose after reading about nothing but beautiful princesses who speak in poetry all the time.

"Do you know what I'm thinking?" asked Bet-

ty as they finished the chapter.

"No. I'm not a bit good at guessing."

"I'm thinking how much dear old Jo would have liked you, Primrose!"

"O Betty, would she?"

"I just know she would. But she would have puzzled you, too. Now, let's read a chapter of Alice. I'm going to leave both the books here with you and you can read them alone and I'll dip in anywhere you happen to be when I come. For I've read them both oceans of times."

"Is Alice anything like Little Women?"

"Oh, no! Not at all. Alice is all fun. Even grown-ups think it is funny. And I do want to read some of it with you. For father says that no book shares as well as Alice does."

Then they read Alice's Adventures and soon the glade was ringing with laughter. Amico was so astonished at seeing his quiet little mistress shouting with mirth that he walked over to Primrose and looked at her anxiously. That made the little girls laugh still more, of course, and Primrose said, "Poor old fellow! I wish you could understand it, too. I am sure you would laugh as well."

While they were reading a long, low whistle came down the ravine from far off up the mountain. Primrose started to her feet. "That is my father calling," she said. "I must go. When will you come again, Betty?"

"Will to-morrow be too soon?"

"Oh, will you come to-morrow? I'm so glad! Good-bye, my dear Betty."

Then Primrose's face clouded sadly and she said, "O Betty, dear, I wish I could be really your friend."

Betty was astonished at that and did not like it. She could not keep her tone from sounding a little hurt as she said, "Why, Primrose, I thought we were already the dearest, dearest friends. I'm sure I feel so to you."

"Oh! I don't mean that, you darling!" said Primrose. "I mean I wish I could do my part and ask you to come to my house to see me. For—" she added sadly in her strange, grown-up little way, "it is right to give your friends hospitality."

Betty saw what she meant, that she would like to "make visits" as other little girls did, and she felt very sorry for Primrose.

But some one else had heard and understood, too, and a voice cried out from the bushes, "Oh, my poor, poor baby!" It was Primrose's father.

Thinking that Betty had gone, he had come down the glade to meet his little daughter. He overheard what Primrose said. Betty could tell by his voice, though she did not see him, that he felt dreadfully hurt; for he was constantly afraid that Primrose was lonely and missed what other girls enjoyed.

Primrose cried out, "O Father, dear! Indeed, I am happy! Indeed, indeed, I am!" and it sounded to Betty as if it was a thing Primrose had to say very often. It came to her lips so

quickly.

Primrose ran into the bushes toward her father and Amico sprang forward to meet him, too.

Betty turned homeward quickly and went down the road. She felt as if she had done something wrong without meaning to and had hurt people and couldn't see how, or help it.

She was a little bit afraid, too, that she might not see Primrose any more. It was too bad to have their lovely morning end so uncomfortably.

Betty cried a little; she could not help it. She cried more for Primrose's sake and for Primrose's father's than for herself, like the good little Betty that she was. She could feel that they were very sad about something, though Betty did not know just what. But she cried for her own sake a

little bit, too. It would be too dreadful if her good times with Primrose were to be ended. She did not think she would dare go up the ravine in the morning.

She was still a little quivery around the mouth and misty around the eyes when she reached the Inn. She hoped that nobody would ask her why. But no one was on the porch but Miss Connie, and she did not seem to notice anything unusual. She just drew Betty down on the bench beside her and put her arms around her and cuddled her and showed her a lapful of pretty beads from Venice that she was stringing, and told her an amusing story about the little Italian girl who had sold them to her. It was comforting in Miss Connie's arms and her dimples were so merry that they seemed to help to cheer Betty up.

Then Miss Connie said, "Why, Betty, what a shiny, sunburned nose you have!" and powdered Betty's face out of a little silver thing.

And that was good, for it kept all the people in the hall from seeing that Betty's eyes and nose were red from crying.

Betty's father and mother had gone for a drive and did not come home until evening, just in time for dinner. So it was rather a forlorn afternoon for Betty, but she gave herself a little shake and made up her mind to hope for the best and expect it.

And in the evening all of her sorrows were ended.

This happened in the twilight, when the "porch was full of everybody," as Betty said. All the guests of the hotel were on the porch watching the nightfall and moonrise that are so lovely in the Adirondacks. Betty was walking up and down with her mother and Miss Connie, and Joe Silver was sitting far off from the others on the steps at the end of the porch. This happened: Amico came down the mountain!

"Look at the beautiful dog!" some one cried out.

Joe Silver stood up and Amico saw him and went right to him. Amico had a note in his mouth and he gave it to Joe.

All the people wondered and exclaimed, of course. They whistled to Amico and called out, "Here, doggie! Here!"

But Amico just turned his back and waved his tail as if to say, "Away with you!" and went up the road.

Then a lot of the people ran to Joe and asked inquisitively, "What is it? What is it, Joe? What is it?"

Joe looked at them gravely. Then he smiled

his long, slow smile and said, "Why, I didn't say anything," and they all laughed and went back and talked about something else.

Betty wanted to know all over. She was so anxious to know that she felt as if she just must find out. But she knew that if it concerned her or if Joe wanted to tell her, he would do so without being asked. So she bravely kept quiet and didn't even look at Joe very much. But she squeezed her mother's hand until it almost hurt her.

Soon Betty was rewarded for her patience. When she went up to her room after dinner, there, on her pincushion, was the note that Amico had brought.

It was from Primrose's father. He was not cross with Betty at all and he had gotten all over being hurt.

This is what the note said:

## DEAR BETTY,

Please do not feel sorry. I knew long ago that Primrose ought to have a playmate. I am very glad that she has found so sweet a one.

Won't you come and have luncheon with us to-morrow? Primrose will be waiting for you in the glade. Get your parents' consent. I enclose

my card. Give it to them and tell them that it is sent in confidence. Cordially,

PRIMROSE'S FATHER.

The card was in a little envelope addressed to Mr. Anderson.

Betty, glowing with delight, ran downstairs and out on the porch to find him.

"O Daddy!" she whispered. "Please come inside a moment. Please!"

There was no one in the hall, so Mr. Anderson read the letter there under the lamp. Then he opened the little envelope and read the card and whistled.

"Is it possible! Is it possible!" he said and hurried away to find Mrs. Anderson.

But Betty ran after him, calling out, "Oh, please wait a minute, Daddy! Please say whether I may go."

Her father smiled. "Forgive me, dear. I forgot you were on pins and needles. Certainly you may go."

It was a happy, happy Betty who went to bed that night. She went to bed ahead of time to make the morning come sooner.

As she fell asleep she murmured, "I wish I could skip to-night and breakfast and have luncheon time to-morrow right now."

## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN CANDOR

# CAPE WILDWIND, August 11th.

MY EXCELLENT ELIZABETH,

Here is a lovely compliment for you.

Mrs. Candor planned a corner of the teeny, weeny guest room in the new cottage to have a low window-seat under a broad, sea-gazing window. She said, "Let us have that seat quite low, for we call that corner 'Betty's Bunk' and look forward to seeing her there some day." Isn't that glory for you?

They have begun to build the new house and I must tell you some of the wonders and delights.

I think the one that will please you most is the nursery. Yes; although all the babies of the Candors have grown up and some have babies of their own, and though all the grandbabies have their own nurseries in their own houses, there's going to be a nursery in the new cottage. It will probably be the smallest one ever seen, but a nursery just the same. And it is to have in it all the fancy, foolish, pretty toys that the Candors never could afford for their own children when they were little. Every baby who wishes to, and whose parents are wise enough to let him come, is to be welcome there at any time. I can plainly foresee that there will be a steady stream of guests once the youngsters get to understand the good times there will be for them at the Candors'.

Isn't that a prize idea? Mother Candor's, of course. I'm up to my eyes in toy dealers' catalogues, and in the fall the blessed old pair and I are going to town to shop for the furnishings; and then we'll buy the prettiest and gayest and most ingenious toys known to man.

There is to be a little rocky, trickling pool in the garden, planted with water flowers. Mother Candor is going to keep crumbs and seed scattered on the rocks to attract the birds. Won't that be a pleasant sight?

I saw that one more room was provided in our plans than the Candors had stated purposes for. When I asked about it, the dear old lady went to the window and looked out and the old gentleman whispered, "For our John's child—in case—"

I was sorry I had asked, though I did want

to know their sorrow and not from curiosity, you may be sure. For it seemed as if I might somehow help them—to bear, if not to relieve it.

It was the sewing-club daughter who finally told me about it. I met her on the sands yesterday and had a talk with her. She is a good, straightforward kind of girl and very frank and friendly. She doesn't see the use of all "the queer things" I do for her parents, but is very grateful for them since they make her parents happy. She thought it rather foolish that I got up and went into the woods before day to gather Indian pipes in the early dawn before the heat of the sun marred their perfection. She said she was sure they'd be nearly as lovely and that her parents would enjoy them as much if I brought them a little later in the day. But she became very grave and sweet and sad when I told her, "I do it for them because they said that John used to."

After a little while she said to me, "I think you ought to know about John. I will tell you." So she did, looking soberly out to sea.

John was a sailor who went far off abroad and roaming over the earth, not just a fisherman sailor like the rest of their "folks." On one of his long voyages his ship was wrecked and he was drowned. Some of his shipmates who were saved

and landed on the coast of Spain had written to John's parents telling them how brave and splendid he had been.

Mother and Captain Candor were brave too and bore the blow with fortitude—for sailor folk and fisher folk are always fortified against sea deaths and face them with courage. Indeed, it is a badge of honor to them to end their lives on the great ocean that they loved.

But it makes us feel thankful to them—doesn't it, dear?—thankful to the men who gladly go into danger on the sea in order that the world's work may be done for us who stay safely at home, and thankful to their dear ones who bear their loss for our gain.

Yes, the Candors were able to face John's death bravely; but there is something else that worries and saddens them.

John Candor had a sweet young wife and tiny baby in England whom his parents had never seen. When they wrote to them after John's death the letters were returned, marked "Not Found." They tried to trace them through the little town in England where they had been when the last the Candors heard, but they had gone away, the neighbors said, to join John at some port and they had never heard from them again. Neither had the Candors, though they had kept

up the search for years. Several of their sons had gone abroad hunting traces of John's baby but had been able to find none at all.

All the Candors feel sure that John's wife must have died, too, or she would surely have written to them. They do not know what has become of the baby, the child of their most beloved son, this dear grandchild who is somewhere on the earth among strangers.

The Captain and Mother Candor know so well that John would want them to have and love his child. So they will not give up hope, though the child must be quite grown up by now. They are always on the alert for some of John's old mates, hoping that they might be able to throw out some clew or to tell them where John had expected to meet his little family.

"It is very dreadful," said the daughter gravely. "I used to think it was more so to the others than to me—for this all happened long ago when I was a little child. But lately I begin to see as I never did before that somehow the rest of us failed to give to mother and father something that they wanted, something that John gave them. It was not our fault," she added proudly. "We have all been dutiful. But I begin to see now that John's nature had a side our natures lack,

that his going took something out of our parents' lives beyond even the loss of a well-loved son."

I never knew until then that I could like the

sewing-club daughter as well as I do now.

After a little hesitation she blushed and said, "You have it yourself, sir,—the thing John had. You have made us all see—at least a little—what our parents wanted. We are very grateful to you—and will try to remember the lesson you have taught us."

Then, as if ashamed of having shown so much feeling to a stranger, she spoke of some pressing

household duty and hurried away.

I have been thinking about John Candor's baby ever since. I believe that the child is alive and will be found and will be all the fine things the father was. I am certain that it will "all end happily" for dear Mother Candor.

But I can't help wishing that, with every swish of the surf that sounds beneath my window to-night, the beautiful, sorrowful song from Shakespeare's *Tempest* did not rise to my soul's ears with a new, grim, tender pathos:

Full fathom deep thy father lies; Of his bones are coral made; Those are pearls that were his eyes; Nothing of him that does fade But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Burthen: Ding-dong!
Hark! now I hear them—Ding-dong, bell.

Now, Miss Clever, if you happen to find any deep-sea sailor men on the little river or the not much bigger pond, you just ask them if they ever went to sea with one John Constant Candor. Oh, no! I cannot treat it as a joke even to cheer up this somber letter. The poor, dear old souls!

Love them, Bettina.

Your everest,
BOBBIN.

That was the letter that Betty received on the morning of the happy day when she was going up the mountain to have luncheon with Primrose.

Betty's bright eyes filled with sympathetic tears as she read, but at the end she said, "I feel certain that it will be all right. I just know it will. It will come out beautifully in some wondrous way." Then Betty chuckled and said to herself, "That sounded more like Primrose than like me, in some wondrous way.' But it's going to come that way, I just know it is. Oh, wouldn't it be

glorious if Bob could help them find John's baby? I hope he will!"

She happened to look down upon the grass just then, and right at her feet she found a four-leaf clover.

"I will take it for a happy sign!" she cried and wished on it that Mother Candor's grand-child might come home.

We need not believe in the sign of the lucky clover, but this we must believe: That sweet, unselfish, loving wishes have a blessing in them.

## CHAPTER VII

#### THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE WOODS

BETTY was a-tingle with excitement as she climbed the mountain to Primrose's.

She was going to have a whole long day with her charming new friend; she was going to see where Primrose lived and be "really friends," as Primrose had said.

Even in the midst of these happy anticipations, Betty found time to enjoy the thought of her bunk in the Candors' cottage. She felt that it was very sweet of Mother Candor to think of her and it gave her another pleasant reason for being eager to see Primrose. She wanted to tell Primrose about "Betty's Bunk."

It was a brilliant, beautiful Adirondack morning and the sunshine, streaming through the open places in the woods, made the white birches shine like snow.

At a turn in the road Primrose and Amico were waiting for her. Primrose was as happy as Betty was, and Amico, too, seemed to realize that it was a very joyous occasion.

As they went up the glen together, Betty told Primrose about her bunk in the Candors' new cottage and said, "If I hadn't found you, Primrose, I'd be perfectly crazy to go there right away and see it as soon as it's built. But now I wouldn't

leave here for anything."

"O Betty!" Primrose said. "I have a splendid idea! Let us find the very prettiest place in all the brook and make a lovely resting-place there for Mother Candor. We can pretend that she is really coming to sit in it. Some day, perhaps, she may be here herself. Who knows? And then we can show it to her!"

"Oh! That will be fine. And, anyway, I can write to Robert about it and he can tell her. Only I think it would be better to make it big enough for Captain Candor, too."

"Yes; of course we must. And we can name it Cove Candor. Shall we search for the fitting place now?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Come then. We can hunt for the cove and build the seat before luncheon if we do not delay. You go up one side of the brook and I'll go up the other and we'll find the very prettiest nook of all."

The little girls kept climbing up the brook's runway, higher and higher on the slippery rocks. Every moment one of them would cry out, "Oh! Look! Look! That must be the prettiest!" But the very next second the other would see something prettier still.

The little brook seemed to laugh at them, as if it knew it was as pretty as could be all the way along. The girls laughed too and Amico darted back and forth wondering what the game was that seemed such fun but proceeded so slowly.

There were shady nooks and sunny nooks and moist nooks and high-and-dry nooks and mossy nooks and flowery nooks and each seemed lovelier than the others.

"They are all so good, Betty," said Primrose, "that we never can decide. We'd better just take the next pretty place we find, or we won't get the seat built this morning."

"That is true, Primrose. And then, suppose Mother Candor should call upon us this afternoon. How embarrassed we should be without a seat to offer her!"

That set them both laughing again, but in the midst of their mirth Primrose pointed upward. "Look, now, Betty! Look there!" she called.

Betty gave a little gasp of delight.

"Oh! That is surely the best place!" she said. "Nothing could possibly be lovelier than that!"

The little laughing brook had widened out on a rocky terrace in its course into a small mirrorlike pool. Into it danced one little cascade, and out of it danced another. The bright sunshine came, in a long, golden, slanting scarf, into the heart of the pool and on the spray of the dancing cascades. The trees and bushes that edged the shady forest were reflected in the watery mirror. The banks were thickly covered with maiden-hair fern and partridge berries and beautiful rainbowtinted lichens. And a true little rainbow rose and fell in the waters of the uppermost cascade. The breeze kept all the leaves of the trees gently waving and flickering between sunshine and shade, and a delightful odor of sassafras filled the air. Some beautiful yellow birds darted back and forth and did not seem to mind the girls' presence at all.

"Allow me to introduce you to Cove Candor,"

said Betty.

"We can find good rocks for the seat a little farther on," Primrose suggested. "It would not do to disturb any of these. Cove Candor is perfect as it is. Besides, I know a place near here where there are some dry rocks in the brook's old course—the one it used before it changed its mind and came this way."

They went where Primrose led and found the rocks, smooth, dry, and soft gray-green in color. They built a little seat of them and made a back for it out of birch twigs woven together and tied with grasses, and cushioned their seat with balsam.

"Isn't that sweet?" Betty cried when it was done. "Now the Candors can come at any minute and we'll be ready for them."

Just then the long, low whistle of Primrose's father came down to them and Primrose answered it with one of her sweet bird-calls.

"Luncheon, Betty!" she said. "Oh, I'm so glad you're coming home with me!"

"So am I," said Betty. "I'm as excited as I can be about it. But, Primrose, I'm glad for another reason, too. Fixing Cove Candor has given me such an appetite. I'm as hungry as I can be."

"I'm famished, too," laughed Primrose. "So come quickly."

Betty's heart was beating so hard with excitement as they went up the mountain that she thought Primrose would hear it. She felt a little bit timid, too. She hoped Primrose's father would not be big and gloomy and sad. She hoped that he would like her and be pleased to have her play with Primrose.

They turned away from the brook on the far

side, and followed the hiddenest trail that Betty had ever seen. It was a real secret trail, just the tiniest path through the trees and underbrush without even a "blaze" to mark it. They went winding and winding through the deep forest. It seemed to Betty so like a fairy-tale that she quoted to herself, "And they went around and around through the forest until they came to a little brown house made of gingerbread."

And then she cried out, "Oh! There it is!" And Primrose said, "Welcome, Betty!"

And there, in the middle of a pretty little sunny clearing, all ringed round with big trees and high, dense underbrush, stood a little brown house, sure enough. It was the smallest real house that Betty had ever seen. She remembered a doll's house almost as big. She felt certain that Primrose's house was quite the smallest really-truly house in the world.

It was not built of gingerbread, but of mountain stones and wood with the bark on. It was covered with vines, and "a dream of a garden," as Betty said, was all around it.

It was almost altogether a wild garden, made of beautiful flowering plants that Primrose and her father had carefully transplanted from the woods and fields. But there were also what Betty called "tame flowers"—sweet old-fashioned garden favorites from seeds and roots that Joe Silver had brought to Primrose.

In a fenced-in place, back of the garden, rocky and sloping upward, were a few mountain goats.

"Oh! It's just lovely, Primrose," Betty ex-

claimed.

"I'm glad you think so, my dear," said a voice from the cottage and Primrose's father came to the door, holding out his hand to Betty.

Betty felt at home with him at once. He wasn't a bit gloomy or terrible. The first thing that Betty noticed was that a tame pigeon was perched on his shoulder. And nobody could be afraid of a man on whose shoulder a little bird felt safe and comfortable.

Mr. Garland was a little, bright-faced man who leaned on a cane as he walked. Whenever he spoke his face looked very young and happy; but Betty soon observed that when he did not see that anyone was looking at him it became strangely sad. Betty thought he looked at such times as if he would feel better if he could have a good cry. He looked, then, just as she had seen little boys look when they had been punished and were ashamed, but would not give anybody the satisfaction of seeing them cry.

He was smiling as he came forward to greet Betty.

"Well, here we are!" he said. "I hope you are hungry; for I got the luncheon all by myself to-day—my little housekeeper, here, was away—and I'm very proud of it."

"Yes, indeed, sir, I'm terribly hungry," Betty said. "We have been hauling stones to build a seat by the brook and it's very hungry work."

"I should think so, indeed. Come on then, lasses. We are having luncheon in the thorn-tree room to-day. Primrose and I change our dining-room almost every day, Betty," he explained. "We thought you'd like the thorn-tree room."

For a moment Betty was greatly surprised and puzzled. She did not understand how there could be a very great choice of dining-rooms in that tiny, little house. But she saw in another minute what the thorn-tree room was.

And Betty surely did like it.

Thorn-tree room was the soft, grassy shadow under the boughs of a broad, low-branching thorn-tree. It was cool and shady and cosy and very beautiful. A most delicious luncheon was spread there and they all sat on the ground around it.

Amico had his plate just a little way off from the others. As soon as the pigeon saw it, he flew from Mr. Garland's shoulder and perched on Amico's head. And when the dog's luncheon was served, the pigeon walked to the other side of the plate and ate from it with him.

"Isn't that wonderful!" said Betty. "I never knew that a dog and a pigeon could be such good friends."

"You see," Mr. Garland explained, smiling, "Amico is such a gentleman. He was good to the pigeon from the start, as soon as he saw that we wished him to be so. The pigeon blew in one terrible winter night, on the worst blizzard we ever saw—and we have some pretty severe storms up here in the winter, let me tell you. He literally blew in on the blizzard. I opened the window just for a moment to air the cottage—we had had to keep it shut—and the bird was swept in by the wind. We kept it, of course,—and by the time spring came, the pigeon was a member of the family."

"Are the goats members of the family, too?"

"Yes, indeed, Betty. And very useful members, too. We drink goats' milk, as the peasants do in some parts of Europe. And that bit of cheese you are eating was made by Primrose out of goats' milk."

"It's mighty good," said Betty. "Oh, dear! How many things Primrose knows! How did you

learn to make the cheese, Primrose?"

"Father taught me. He learned how in Italy

long ago. Some other young men laughed at him, then, for taking the trouble to learn. But now he is very glad that he did."

"So am I," laughed Betty, taking another slice of the cheese and spreading it with some tart cur-

rant jam.

The luncheon party was so pleasant and Mr. Garland was so kind to Betty and seemed to like her so well that Betty thought him "a perfect dear" and quite forgot that there was any mystery or queerness.

The little girls cleared up thorn-tree room when the luncheon was over and then Betty saw inside of the tiny, delightful house.

There were but two rooms, a big general room and a very little one for Primrose. The first thing that Betty noticed was that there was scarcely any furniture and that the beds were berths, built like shelves on the wall.

Primrose's bed, in the little room of her own, was built so low that she could use it for a seat by day. But Mr. Garland's berth, in the "big" living room, was very high up on the wall. It had a little private window under the ceiling; and Mr. Garland had to climb a ladder to reach it.

If Mr. Garland's bed had been lower there would have been no room for the books. For, except for a rustic table and two chairs and a stool

—all made by Mr. Garland out of birch trees—and the stove and a birchwood box for the pots and dishes, there was not a thing in the room but shelves of books. Books and books and books! And all that Betty looked at seemed to be very wise books that she thought she would be almost afraid to try to read.

Primrose's room was very sweet and dainty. There were pink and white curtains in the window and a snow-white chair and table and a soft pink-and-pale-green woven rag carpet. There was a little window-seat with pale green cushions, and a pink-flowering morning-glory vine peeped in the window above it.

Primrose showed her the tiny clothes closets and the little bit of a bathroom, and Betty was delighted.

"It's so wee and pretty," she said, "it's like a dream house. Like playing house."

Primrose was greatly pleased at Betty's praise of her home, in which she took quite a housewifely pride.

"Would you like to see the little cellar?" she asked.

Of course, Betty said, "Yes."

It was the smallest cellar ever seen; but it was as neat as wax, with proper little piles of kindling

wood and barrels and bags and shelves of provisions.

Betty had begun by pitying Primrose, but when she went through this little fairy house she almost envied her instead.

"I just love your house," she said to Mr. Garland. "I'd love to live here."

"Do you really think you would be happy here?" Mr. Garland asked her, and when Betty assured him that she would, he added, "Well, you are a blessed little comfort to say so." And he stooped and kissed her.

Betty was glad she had said it, because she could see that Mr. Garland had been worried to think of Primrose's having to live 'way up the mountain in the little house, and that he felt better to know that another little girl would have liked it.

"Now," said he, "I must be off. I have to go back to business, now."

Going to business! Betty was astonished—she couldn't imagine what kind of business Mr. Garland could have, away off there in the mountains.

She said nothing, but she could not help looking amazed.

Mr. Garland saw her expression and laughed. He was pleased to see a little girl who could control her curiosity and not ask inquisitive questions. He said, "Come along, you two! We'll show Betty the factory, Primrose."

The factory! Whatever did he mean?

He led the way into the woods to another little house in another little clearing. This house was of stone with a slanting glass roof, like the roof of a lean-to. Inside of it were all sorts of things that artists use; Betty saw paints and palettes and easels and a lay-figure and draperies.

There were a number of pictures, too. Some were paintings of the mountains and the woods, so perfect that they seemed just windows to the out-doors and not pictures at all. But most of them looked like the covers of books or the advertisements you see in the street-cars.

In the best light was a large canvas not quite finished. Betty gave a little shout of delight and then stood silent with admiration before it. Even though it was not completed, it was the most beautiful picture that Betty had ever seen. It was a portrait of Primrose, with Amico.

It was just like her, with that same sweet wonder in her eyes that had made Betty love Primrose the minute she saw her. The faded blue gingham dress was just as faded in the picture—perhaps a little more so. The Primrose in the picture was listening—you could tell that at a glance—and her mouth looked as if, in just

a minute, she would chirp or whistle. She was standing on a little knoll with bright blue sky and white clouds behind her, and she and Amico were right in the middle of a clump of bluebells about the color of Primrose's eyes.

"I call that picture *True Blue*," said Mr. Garland, putting his hand proudly on his little daughter's shoulder. "What would you call it, Betty?"

"I call it darling," said Betty, running up to Primrose and giving her a kiss.

On the wooden stand that held the painting a tiny picture was tacked. It was a miniature of a very pretty lady and Betty felt sure that it was Primrose's mother, for Primrose looked so much like it. Betty thought that Mr. Garland had put the little picture there so that he could try to make the picture of Primrose as much as possible as her mother had looked. She took Mr. Garland's hand and gave it a little sympathetic squeeze and talked about the other pictures.

"And what do they look like?" asked the artist.

"Advertisements?" Betty ventured timidly.

"Right. I make them and send them, through Joe Silver, to an agent in New York. That is this factory's business." Mr. Garland did not look very happy about it and said quickly, "But these other pictures and the one of Primrose are love paintings. These landscapes are just little loves and may, perhaps, be sold some day. But True Blue, here, is a big love painting and is never, never to be sold."

After a while Betty and Primrose and Amico ran out to play in the garden and left him to his work. Primrose got out her little gardening tools and she and Betty trimmed and clipped and dug and spruced up the little garden busily until everything was done and the narrow paths were swept clean and it was time for Betty to go home.

"I shall write to Robert," she said, "and tell

him all I can tell of this lovely day."

"Don't forget to tell Mother Candor about Cove Candor," said Primrose.

"Indeed I won't forget. I'll say that it is all

ready and that they should come right away."

"And give Mother Candor this bluebell out of the garden. Put it in the letter—bluebells press so well! We call this one the Splendid Giant. Father and Joe Silver say that they never saw such a big one or such a bright one."

"Oh, thank you; Mother Candor will be glad, I know," said Betty. And she added to herself, "I'm going to tell Bob it's the very color of Primrose's eyes. I learned that from the

painting, and I'm sure it's worth telling the Candors, since they love to know about pretty things."

Betty was so happy when she got home and had so much to tell her mother about her wonderful day that she quite forgot there was anything secret and troublesome about the Garlands. But that very evening she was strangely reminded of the uncomfortable mystery.

A queer thing happened.

Miss Connie had invited Betty into her room to help make fudge on her chafing dish. While the fudge was cooling she let Betty look through her box of gorgeous scarfs and sashes. Miss Connie had traveled, almost all around the world, it seemed to Betty. She had a scarf or sash from every country and she could tell the most delightful stories about the places in which she found them and the people who sold or gave them to her.

"Just pick out any one that interests you and I'll tell you about it," said Miss Connie.

Story-loving Betty was having a pleasant time, you may believe. She had learned about a brilliant piece of red embroidery from Bulgaria and was in the midst of the history of a piece of lovely peach-blow silk from France, when she chanced to look at the clock on Miss Connie's table to see how near bed-time it was.

And right near the clock, on Miss Connie's table, was a picture of Primrose Garland's mother!

It was in a little gold frame, exactly like the one up the mountain.

Betty said afterward that she nearly burst with excitement.

She was a good loyal little confidante, who could keep a secret, and she remembered that she must not speak of Primrose or her father to any one in the hotel. So she kept silence, although she did so long to ask Miss Connie about the picture.

Betty scarcely heard the end of the story of the peach-blow scarf and she did not even enjoy the fudge as much as usual. She was so anxious to go to her mother and to tell her of the two miniatures.

When she had thanked Miss Connie and bade her good-night, Betty ran to her mother's room and told her breathlessly about her strange discovery.

"Isn't it just like a story?" she cried. "Of course, I didn't tell, Mother. Of course, I wouldn't. Though I should think anybody could tell any secret to dear Miss Connie."

"You were very right not to tell," said Mrs. Anderson, "and I'm sure it must have been hard.

Now go to sleep and try to forget all these vexatious questions. And, Betty dear, if I were you, I would say nothing to Primrose or her father about Miss Connie's having a miniature, either. I think it might simply disturb them."

Betty promised to be careful, but she sighed.

"It's a great nuisance not to be old enough to be told things," she thought. "What can it all be about?" Then she shook her head and banished all unhappy thoughts. "Well, anyway," she said sleepily, "I've had a simply perfect day, and I hope I shall dream about it."

# CHAPTER VIII

#### A LETTER AND A LULLABY

BETTY opened her eyes sleepily on a beautiful, pale-yellow morning.

A voice outside her window was yodeling to her, giving that quaint mountain call that the wise Germans found long ago to be a sound that belongs to the hills.

Betty leaped to her feet, wide awake in a minute, threw on her little pink eiderdown wrapper —for early Adirondack mornings are cool—and ran to the window.

"Yes, Dad!" she called out. And, "How

early you are up!" she added.

"Yes. I'm going to tramp to Elizabethtown before the sun is high. There was a little rain in the night and the roads are not dusty and everything smells so sweet and good. Want to come with me?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! Will you wait for me? I won't take a minute."

"Righto! Hurry up, then, and we can have breakfast together."

Betty dressed as quickly as she could. She loved to go tramping with her father, because he had keen eyes for all the pretty and interesting things along the way that other people overlooked.

He pointed out the humming-birds in a cottage garden and the pinky tip of a high mountain cloud and the good huckleberries all but hidden among other bushes and many other joys that are too small to be seen by an ordinary observer but go so far toward making a country walk delightful. And he never minded waiting, as some grown folks would have done, when Betty just had to stop to admire a particularly pleasing view or gather a bunch of "everlasting" that seemed bigger and finer than usual.

Everybody knew him, too, and all the country people they met along the road or in their gardens stopped him and told him interesting bits of news, and some of them gave Betty big apples or cookies and milk or a few old-fashioned flowers.

They met the country postman in his little jogging cart going from post-office to post-office, and he knew Mr. Anderson, too, and said, "I think I left something at the New Petersburg office for you, sir."

So they went eagerly on to the little post-office -which was only a little corner of a little sittingroom of a little white farm-house. There the post-master, who was just the farmer except at mail times, let down his horn glasses very carefully and looked at them. He let down his glasses because he wore them on the top of his head when he wasn't using them. Then he fumbled through his little pile of letters, saying over and over, "Anderson-Anderson-Anderson" in a surprised, studious tone, as if he had never heard a name like that before and was afraid he might forget it before he came to their letters. Betty had to try hard not to laugh at him and she could see her father's eyes twinkling a little, too.

"Ah! Here it is!" the postmaster said at last, with a great sigh of relief, "Miss Elizabeth Anderson, Apple Tree Inn."

So the letter was for Betty herself, and not for Mr. Anderson after all. It was from Robert.

Betty read the letter aloud as they walked on slowly. At least, they began by walking on slowly as Betty read, but she tripped over so many little stones in the rocky road that Mr. Anderson laughed and said, "I'm afraid you will bruise your little nose, Betty. Let us stop on

this little bridge and read the letter together." So they leaned against the railing and read:

CAPE WILDWIND, Aug. 16th.

DEAR BETTY-IN-A-FAIRY-TALE,

Mother Candor loves her bluebell and I can tell you a very pretty fact about it. It is not only the color of Primrose's eyes; it is just the exact color of Mother Candor's eyes, too! I pointed out the similarity to Captain Candor and his own eyes opened wide in wondering appreciation and he said, "Well, well! And I always thought her eyes were like the sea and nothing but the sea-except for the blue of the sky reflected in it. Well, well! Who would have thought that this bit of mountain flower and the big ocean had this much in common! And Mother Candor's eyes, too! Well, I dare say all beautiful things are alike in one way or another, if we could only see it. That is why all sorts of folks have the love of true and fine and lovely things somewhere in their hearts, however they have lived and wherever. Some please some and others please others. But there's just one Great Beauty after all. Just one Spirit of Beauty." You may not understand all that Captain Candor meant, little Betty mine; but if you read it over and try to remember what he said,

I'm sure there will come a time when you will understand and be glad.

We are so busy with the new house that we have neither time nor thought for much else, these days. I never saw plans for a house made so quickly or a house being built in such a quick, smooth way without delays. You see, the Candors are so perfectly agreed that they do not have to stop to discuss anything. And all the workmen around here are their friends and are as eager to have the house built soon and well as they are themselves.

When they have finished digging the cellar and making the foundations, we are going to start the garden. All the Candor grandchildren are going to help. The sewing-club daughter asked their parents for permission and they said the little gardeners might dig to their hearts' content. Mother Candor and I are to give instructions and Captain Candor is to see that they are carried out to the letter. For I fear that some of the grandchildren would make round beds full of "railroad lilies"—as Mother Candor calls cannas, because they always have them at railroad stations—and stick up straight shrubs all alone here and there in the grass and put together colors that hate one another, unless we

make them cling close to the pretty plan we have decided upon. For, how says the poet?—

Different men have different opinions; Some likes apples and some likes inions.

We all have the same opinion about your sweet Primrose and about Miss Connie, too. Miss Connie has gone to the Candors' hearts like a needle to a magnet. They call her "sweet Connie" and say that she must be a perfect darling. Therefore you are to tell us more about her.

It is mighty fine of you, Sister Busy B., to refrain from asking about all the mysteries that are making your kindly little heart fairly burst with curiosity. That is a great thing to have and one that few little lasses your age—and few bigger ones either—have achieved, honey. I mean the delicacy to wait, no matter how deep your kindly interest may be, until folks choose to tell you their affairs, instead of asking or forcing confidences.

But, never mind, you shall know soon. For I am sure that every one must feel your sweet sympathy and reward it with confidence, as far as may be. So put a stone in each pocket of your pinafore to keep from bouncing quite off the mountain-tops.

I must go now to look at the weather, for the sea is crawling surlily, not at all like the merry comrade it has been all this time. And the sky is about the color of a slippery, slimy pavement after a rain in the city; and the King of the Winds is blowing from puffed cheeks little hot, angry gusts of temper and fret. There is going to be "weather," as the folks around here say of a storm. And I love to see it come up—always provided the little ships are under cover.

Here's my love on the gale, my lass,

BOBBERT.

"Think of their having stormy weather there, Father," said Betty, "when it has been so clear and lovely here. But Bob always loves a good storm. So that's all right."

"It's a pretty bad coast for storms, however," said Mr. Anderson gravely. "Robert is quite right to hope that the little boats are in harbor."

As they entered Elizabethtown, Mr. Anderson

looked down at Betty and smiled.

"Wait a minute," he said, and stopped under a big elm-tree at the turn of one of the quiet, shady country streets. "I must tell you now what I came to Bettytown for."

Betty laughed when he said "Bettytown" for Elizabethtown, for the family always teased Betty because when she was a tiny girl she used to think that the pretty little village was named after her.

"I came to get something for Primrose Garland. Something that she needs."

"Why, Daddy! For Primrose? What?

What? Oh, please tell me!"

"But it depends upon you, Miss, whether I buy it or not. For you have to have one, too, if I do."

"Oh, what, Daddy dear? What?"

"Betty, are you entirely too big to play with dolls?"

"Oh! It's a doll! Of course I'm not, you dear! I shall never be too big to like them; I know I shan't. Only I am too big to travel with them now. So I didn't bring any. I should just love to have one and I'm sure that Primrose would, too. I think a doll would be good company winter nights for Primrose, and I don't believe Mr. Garland ever thought about getting one."

The dolls in the little toy store all stood up straight in boxes without covers; Betty could look them over easily by just walking along. She picked out a brown-eyed one for Primrose and a blue-eyed one for herself.

"For, it's funny, Father," she said, "but girls

almost always prefer the kind of eyes they haven't."

"All little girls' eyes are pretty," said her father, "when they are kind and merry." And he thought proudly that there were none in the world kinder or merrier than his own little daughter's.

Primrose's doll had on a pink frock and Betty's was dressed in blue.

"You see," Betty explained on the homeward journey, "Primrose's little room is pink and this dolly will look just sweet there."

When they reached the hotel a little before luncheon and Betty had kissed and thanked him, Mr. Anderson said teasingly, "I suppose you are too tired to climb up to see Primrose this afternoon." But his eyes twinkled as he said it.

"I should say I'm not!" answered Betty. "As if I could possibly wait until to-morrow to bring the dolls."

When Betty had climbed the mountain and approached Primrose's house, she heard little splashes and sounds of laughter in the brook and followed them. Primrose and Amico were wading in the clear, deep water.

"This way, Betty!" cried Primrose as she heard Betty calling to her. "Take off your shoes and stockings and come in with us. There are many little cascades here and it is very pleasant."

Betty decided to say nothing about the new dolls just then, but to surprise Primrose with them when the wading was over. So she sat the two dollies up together behind a big rock and went to the brookside, chuckling to herself at the thought of Primrose's coming pleasure.

It certainly did look pleasant in the little brown brook with its flashing water and it didn't take

Betty long to get in it.

"Oh, come up here, Primrose!" she called out. "This is the slipperiest, slopiest, rockiest place of all. Wading here will be the most exciting!"

"All right. But look out, Betty. The rocks are soapstone and the wet moss is very uncertain."

It was indeed hard to keep standing, with little waterfalls all over your feet and the rocks and wet moss like glass beneath them. But the adventurous little girls went on and on, balancing themselves with outstretched arms, and laughing at their narrow escapes.

"Don't you envy Amico?" asked Primrose. "He hasn't the least trouble. See how firmly he stands on that slippy spot we didn't dare try!"

"Oh, yes! But he has four feet, you see, and

we have only two. That reminds me of a funny thing my little cousin said," said Betty. "We knew a little dog who had been run over by a trolley-car and had only three legs. And I asked little Saidee if she didn't feel sorry for the poor doggie and she said, 'Ye-es, Cousin Betty-but he ought to be all right with three legs. 'Cause I'm all right with only two."

When the laughter at wee Saidee's comment had subsided, "Look, Betty!" said Primrose. "There is the Water Sprite's Stairway!"

"Oh-h! Isn't it lovely! I think I'll walk up it."

"Careful!" Primrose warned.

Betty walked safely up a little natural stairway in the middle of the brook. This was not easy to do, because the rocky stairway was well carpeted with smooth, long, grassy moss bent downward by the hurrying water. Betty was quite proud of herself when she reached the top in safety. Then, growing bolder, she turned around and tried to walk downstairs.

Her feet flew out from under her and she sat down very suddenly and slid down the Water Sprite's Stairway and settled in a little basin at the foot of the stairs, where the water came pouring down her neck and all over her.

Betty wasn't a bit hurt, and she laughed so

hard that she couldn't get up. Primrose hurried to help her, and she laughed, too, so that she didn't look where she was going and she fell on her knees right beside Betty.

When they got out of the brook, they were both sopping wet. But the day was warm and

they were very near Primrose's house.

There they put on dry clothes and hung their wet ones out to dry. Betty looked very funny in Primrose's dress, which was too long for her and not wide enough to button in the back.

"Do you think my clothes will dry before going-home time?" she asked with some anxiety.

"Oh, yes! The sun is warm and the breeze is brisk and I've wrung them out as dry as I could."

"I should think you had! There's a regular

pool there."

"Yes. And it's right by that rabbit hole. Won't Mr. Bunny be surprised when he comes home and finds a little lake in his front yard?"

"A pool by a rabbit hole! O Primrose, let's

play Alice and have a caucus race!"

The caucus race was a great success. Amico and the pigeon played it, too, and that made it seem "truly true," Betty said, and exactly like the caucus race in *Alice*.

She did not find it surprising that Amico ran around the pool in a circle, behind the little girls,

when Primrose told him to do so. For he always obeyed every single thing Primrose told him to do and sometimes did what Primrose wished even before she bade him. Primrose said, "Amico has a wondrous wit," and Betty replied heartily, "He surely has."

But the girls laughed until their sides ached to see the pigeon caucusing with them. He fluttered and hurried and was too funny for words.

In the midst of their mirth, Primrose's father came down the trail. He saw the caucus race and knew at once that they were playing Alice. He stopped and gathered two ripe thimble-berries and then came forward, leaning on his stick, and offered them to the little girls, saying politely, "Allow me to make you a present of these beautiful thimbles!"

Betty thought that he was a dear father and the thought came to her again that she did so wish he could be happy and not so secret and strange.

They told him about their adventure in the brook and Mr. Garland said that they would have to rechristen the Water Sprite's Stairway and name it "Betty Falls."

Suddenly Betty stopped short in the game and cried out, "Well! I've forgotten our children! How could I?"

Primrose realized, of course, that Betty was starting some new game and waited to see what she would do next.

"I left them down behind a rock near the brook," said Betty. "I do hope they have been good and haven't run away."

She led the way to the rocky seat where the

dolls were patiently waiting.

"There they are; as good as gold!" she said. "This is your child, Primrose, and this is mine. My father sent them."

Primrose was delighted. She was so surprised and happy that she could not speak at first. She just hugged her doll and cuddled it. At last she said, "Oh! I do thank your father, Betty. I'm so glad to have this beautiful doll. I had one once, but Amico broke her—that was when Amico was only a pup," she hastened to explain, anxious to excuse her favorite.

"Let's name our dolls," suggested Betty. "What name do you choose?"

"Why, I'm going to name mine Elizabeth, of course, and call her Betty for short."

"Thank you for the compliment, Primrose. And, of course, my child is named Primrose."

The afternoon that began with such an exciting game ended very quietly, as the little girls

sat under the thorn-tree and dressed and played with their dolls.

"I'm going to leave my Primrose up here with her godmother," said Betty. "And now my clothes are dry and it is getting late. So let us put our children to bed."

They took the dolls into the cottage and laid them on Primrose's window seat and covered them with a shawl.

"Shall I sing them to sleep?" asked Primrose shyly.

"Oh, pray do!"

"I'm going to sing a song that proves I love you," said Primrose. "I would not let any one I did not love dearly hear this song. For my dear mother made it for me when I was little. It is one of the few things I remember about her and it is one of my most sacred possessions."

Betty patted Primrose's hand, and Primrose sang in her wonderful, clear sweet voice:

Baby shall swing In the golden ring

Of the moon, of the bright young moon; Shall rock to and fro In the cool, cloudy glow

Of the moon, of the cradling moon.

Croon—Croon—Croon!

Baby shall sleep On the billowy deep Of a cloud, of a big, soft cloud; Baby shall dream Where the sleepy stars gleam In a crowd, in a blinky crowd. Speak-not-loud!

Mother's arm is the ring Where Baby shall swing In the light of the bright young moon; And this pillow shall be Baby's billowy sea And the cloud where the dreams come soon.

Groon-Groon-Groon!

The music of the little song was so sweet and haunting that it kept in Betty's mind and she hummed it over gently to herself all the way home. She ceased singing it as she reached the hotel, of course, because she knew that Primrose would not wish any one to hear it.

But as she went into her room to dress for dinner, imagine her surprise! Miss Connie's door was open and she could see Miss Connie sitting by the window in a big wicker-chair and bending over a bit of embroidery; and she could hear Miss Connie singing very softly as she sewed:

Mother's arm is the ring Where Baby shall swing

In the light of the bright young moon; And this pillow shall be Baby's billowy sea

And the cloud where the dreams come soon.

Croon—Croon—Croon!

Betty gasped with astonishment. How did Miss Connie ever learn Primrose Garland's mother's song?

It was so queer!

Betty said, "I give it up!" just as if it were a riddle she could not guess. She shook her head and shrugged her shoulders. "I'm certainly puzzled up," she sighed.

Mrs. Anderson came into Betty's room and what she said made Betty forget all the mystery for a time.

"Father has just received the newspapers, Betty. They've been having terrible storms at Cape Wildwind."

"Bob said in my letter that he thought a storm was coming. I hope he hasn't been blown to pieces. But Bob loves blowy, stormy, wild weather."

"Not so stormy as this, I think, my dear! A schooner was entirely destroyed off Cape Wildwind. It must have been very dreadful."

"O dear! Were any people killed, Mother?"

"I believe not. Thanks be, there are no reports of any lives lost."

"Well, I'm very glad it wasn't serious."

"Not serious? When a ship was wrecked?"

Mrs. Anderson couldn't help smiling.

"Well, Mother, I am so glad that no people were hurt that I cannot think any thoughts about it but glad ones."

"Perhaps you are right, my little optimist. We shall probably have a letter from Robert very soon, telling us all about it. Now dress for dinner, dear. It is late."

"I hope Bob's letter will be to me," said Betty. "I know it will be thrilling."

## CHAPTER IX

#### THE STORM

R OBERT'S next letter was addressed to Betty, just as she had hoped, and you will agree that she was right when she had said that she knew it would be thrilling:

CAPE WILDWIND, Aug. 18th.

BETTY HIGH-AND-DRY,

We've been having "weather," Captain Candor says. And I think we have been having in one day all the stormy weather there is in the world. I forgot there were mild, pleasant mountain places and thought the whole world was made of angry wind and furious water.

I'm going to tell you about it.

It began day before yesterday, just after I mailed my last letter to you. Remember I told you there was a storm brewing? Well, I stood

at my window and watched it brew. And all the witches in the winds never brewed such a tempest before.

At first the clouds were solid and gray-green, but whirling and tumbling over one another as if they were boiling. A queer, grayish yellow storm-light covered land and sea and gave a ghastly effect to everything. The madly waving trees over the Point seemed slate-gray and the grass was yellow ochre.

The wind began to blow. After the first tremendous puff, I had to stop looking out of the window to pick up the contents of my room. They had been sent flying in every direction.

Before I could get the window closed, the room was damp with the rain that seemed to come in in solid water. Throughout the hotel doors were banging and blinds were slamming and people were running and shouting. The rain was roaring on the windows and the wind howled above all. The air got steadily darker.

I put on a raincoat and cap and started downstairs. The instant I opened the door of my room, I was sucked up through it and it slammed after me.

Outdoors, with the rain coming down like a waterfall and the flying spray and sand, I could no more look into the wind toward the ocean than

I could look through a wall. But I could hear the fearful pounding of the surf. The roar of the wind and waves was deafening. For, before the storm had "broken" fifteen minutes, the waves were running "mountain-high"—and, really, they sounded like falling mountains.

I was as wet in a second as if I had been blown overboard and I would have been the whole length of the piazza if I hadn't held on nobly by the door-knob.

In the shelter of the lea of the house, you could stand and breathe. There I met a few others. Some yelled, "Tornado!" and some shouted back, "No—too extended for a tornado. Cyclone or hurricane!"

The storm kept bellowing for hours. But suddenly, as if on a signal, the wind stopped blowing.

It was as if somebody had closed King Æolus's window. The wind and rain stopped, but the surf kept on pounding and the waves rode high.

I went to the beach to look at the sea. The yellow-gray light was still over everything and I could see the enormous waves rear up and smash down.

And on the Point, right in front of the Candors' cottage, a big schooner was coming ashore!

It was an awful sight. All four masts were

gone. There was a tangle of masts and rigging on deck and "alongside," and the boat was sent swinging upward and then dropped down, rolling madly, until one minute I could see her whole deck and the next minute most of her keel.

And there were sailors on her! O Betty, I did not have to stop to pray when I saw them. It prayed itself! The vision and the appeal came together. And next came the thought of John Candor and that his mother must have once imagined scenes like this, night after night.

Some of the life-saving crew were already getting the big boat out. But there seemed so few of them! For, you know, the men are not on duty in the summertime, and some of them were away. So I ran toward the Point to see if I could help.

It did not look as if it would be possible to launch the boat through that surf. And, though the wind had stopped blowing, the schooner was coming ashore with the send of the waves. I thought she must certainly strike the beach very soon and be rolled over and over like a cork.

But she suddenly swung around, head to sea, and seemed to hang there. Her anchors were down and had caught and held her. But every wave flung her up toward the sky and jumped over her even then. By this time I had reached the Point.

There were but five men working to get the boat out and only three of them were members of the regular life-saving crew, who really knew how to launch the boat. And it was a task for at least ten trained surfmen; for it was a new, up-to-date life-boat, very large and very heavy, with a big gasoline engine, besides places for twelve oars.

I joined the five men and we got the boat down to the edge of the water. The life-boat was on a sort of a truck with two wheels and easy enough to roll along the beach. The trouble began after that.

"Can any of you fellows run a gasoline engine?" yelled one of the life-saving men, above the roar of the surf.

As nobody answered, I said I would try.

"Get in, then, and start her up!" he shouted.

So I climbed up into the boat and fussed about with the big motor. After a few precious minutes that seemed like hours, I found the various cocks and switches and succeeded in starting the engine.

"Now, all together, boys!" commanded the surfman. "Run her in when I say the word.—
Now!"

Everybody pushed and the truck ran down into the water. The surfman had chosen the exact moment when a wave had struck and was retreating-but we were too slow. The next wave came rolling up and smashed into foam a few feet ahead of us; the water surged up over the wheels of the boat and swung her around sideways, in spite of all we could do. One of the volunteers was thrown against the truck and hurt so badly that he had to give up. So there was the boat, all but upset—the truck sinking into the sand and only four men left, besides me, still in the boat.

Three more men came running up to help and we got the truck back on the beach and pointed straight at the water again. We tried again and again to make a launching-in vain. The last time, that wave not only lifted the boat off the truck and knocked it sideways, but also dashed it hard against the beach. I was thrown out. Fortunately I had stopped the engine first.

"They'll have to drown," said one of the surfmen; he was crying like a woman. "They'll have

to drown. We can't do anything."

And just at that moment came Captain Candor, running like a boy, with six more men that he had got together.

"Come on, boys!" his voice rang out cheerily.

"We'll get them off! Here are men enough to launch a war vessel, let alone this little skiff. Get along the gunwale, all of you. You, Robert—are you the engineer?—get in there and be ready to start the motor. Now! With every wave give her a lift out. Now! Again! Again! Lift her! Heave!"

His cheerful, hearty voice was so compelling that they actually did lift the boat—the waves helping—until she was straightened out and again pointed toward the water. The waves rolled up around her. If we could get her a few feet farther in she would float. But, even when afloat, there would be those angry breakers, ready to swing her around and roll her over.

But Captain Candor knew his business. He was as calm and quiet as could be. Inch by inch, he worked the boat farther down, until the men lifting at the bow were up to their waists in the water and could scarcely keep their feet.

"The next wave will do it for us!" called the Captain. "When I speak, lift for your lives, heave her down as far as you can, and when she floats, jump in quick! You, engineer, stand by to start! And, remember, all, that He who made the sea will give us power!"

We were tired and panting and wet; but the Captain's voice thrilled us like new life.

Tense and prepared, we watched the next wave come rolling in. It was a big fellow. It curled over, smashed into foam and the surge rushed up the beach, boiling around us. I could feel the boat quiver.

"Now!" ordered the Captain.

I felt the boat tremble and start, then make a long slide through the sand; the men, up to their waists in water, lifting and pushing. I felt her leave the sand and float; the receding wave sucked her out rapidly.

"Jump in!" came the order, and to me, "Go ahead!"

Five of the men succeeded in getting in. The rest were too tired or not quick enough. The Captain came over the rail like a flying-fish, and grasped the big steering oar. I had the engine running fast. The boat went out on the back of the receding wave. The men put oars out and rowed. It all happened in a flash.

I had to run the engine hard, for we knew that unless we got out beyond the line where the waves broke, before the next one came smashing down on us, we should be swamped or rolled over. We had only a few seconds.

We made it! The boat met the next wave just before it broke. We climbed up its front, hung almost perpendicularly, then went over into the hollow beyond.

If the Captain had moved a hair's breadth the wrong way,—well, he didn't, but held the boat true as a line.

We passed over the next big wave and the next. And the rest was easy.

We ran down to the wreck, came up as close as we dared; and the men on her jumped for us. Some jumped into the boat, some fell short and had to be dragged in. But we got them all! All were unhurt, too, except one who pitched forward as he landed in the boat and struck his head on my engine. He was knocked unconscious.

After we had them all, we ran up the beach and around the Point into quiet water and landed everybody safely.

Captain Candor had the unconscious man—who will soon be well, the doctor says—brought into his house and made me come, too, to spend the night.

Mother Candor, very pale and trembling, met us at the door. She put her arms around the wet, tired Captain and held him close.

"Thank God, you saved them!" she said.

"Thank God, He saved them!" replied the Captain as he kissed her.

Now, what do you think of my Candors, Betty Beloved?"

Your sailor brother,

BOB.

Betty's eyes were wet and she was very serious when she finished reading her letter. She gravely followed the little Cedar Brook trail up which her parents had gone on their way to Deer Hill for ferns.

They saw her coming toward them in her quick way; but something subdued in her manner made Mrs. Anderson say, "Here comes our daughter, with something on her mind."

Betty began to talk to them as soon as she got within speaking distance.

"Mother, Father," she said, earnestly, "Robert Anderson is a hero! And Captain Candor is one! Don't be frightened, Mother! Bob's all right, perfectly all right. See the long letter he wrote. I came to bring it to you to read right away. Only please don't read it out loud. I feel as if I couldn't bear to read it again just yet, or to hear it read right away, either. It gave me the scaredest, creepiest, cryingest feelings. But I'm happy, very. And so proud of Robert! Will you read it to yourselves, please? For I don't want to

go away. I feel as if I wanted to be by you right now, Mother."

Mrs. Anderson put her arm around Betty and drew her down on the log beside her, and kept her held close while her parents read the letter in silence.

They understood and shared Betty's mixed emotions.

"I think I feel both proud and creepy, too, as Betty does," said her father.

"I feel thankful, deeply thankful," said Mrs. Anderson; "and it seems to me that I can scarcely do without seeing Robert to be sure that he is really well and none the worse for having been in such danger."

"Of course, he is well," Mr. Anderson reassured her. "Our husky Bob can stand a lot more than a wetting and a shaking up. Besides, he must be well or he couldn't have written this long letter to Betty."

"I'm so proud of Bob!" said Betty. "Prouder than ever, I feel as if I had to see him right away, too, to tell him how perfectly bursting with pride I am. It makes him preciouser than ever. Isn't it wonderful, Father, that Bob is a hero now?"

"Now?" said Mr. Anderson in his wise way. "Not any more now than always, Betty. People are not brave on occasion; they are either

always brave or always cowardly—though it takes the occasion to show it. Mother and I are always proud of Robert. Nothing strong and good that he could do would seem wonderful or unusual to us."

Betty glowed with pleasure. She loved to have her brother praised. Then she gave a little humorous, wistful sigh, "It's hard to be the young one of just two children when the big one is so splendid," she said. "I hope you will feel like that about me when I'm grown; but I don't see why you ever should."

Mrs. Anderson kissed the top of Betty's brown head and smiled at her husband over it, as if to say that they felt a good deal of pride and confidence in their little daughter already.

"Isn't the Captain a glorious old person?" said Mr. Anderson. "Speaking of heroism! At his age!"

"Indeed he is. But I think Mother Candor was even braver than he," said Mrs. Anderson, "because it is harder to stay at home and suffer anxiety and suspense and risk your loved ones for the sake of others—it is much harder and braver to do that than if you were only risking yourself. Besides, you do not have the excitement to help you bear it. I always think of Nansen—the great arctic explorer, Betty, who

went up into the terrible icy wastes. In his book, Farthest North, there is a dedication to his wife, which says that the book is in her honor, because she was brave enough to stay at home while he went up toward the North Pole exploring."

"That's true," said Betty. "Everybody has to be brave some way, don't they? I'm anxious to tell Primrose about the storm," she went on. "She'll be so proud and excited. That's one of the nicest things about Primrose; she is always as glad as I am about the things that make me glad."

## CHAPTER X

PRIMROSE'S COUSIN AND NIGHT IN THE WOODS

"I SUPPOSE I had better not go up the mountain this morning, Mother?" asked Betty on the porch after breakfast.

"Why, my dear, perhaps you had better not, as you are going to spend the night there. Give the Garlands a little time alone," replied Mrs.

Anderson smilingly.

"Yes—I suppose I ought to be willing to let a day go by without Primrose, as I am going to have such a gorgeous time with her to-night, sleeping up on the mountain, and spending the evening in that darling little house. Oh! It is so good of them to want me and so good of you and Father to let me go, and I am so happy!

—Do you think that Mr. Garland will think that I come too often? I don't want to wear my welcome out," said Betty anxiously.

"I am certain he does not think so, dear. I am certain that he must be glad to have Primrose see you as often as she can. But Primrose has little tasks to do and perhaps it is just as well to give her a day off once in a while."

"Yes, Mother. But the best of it is that sometimes she lets me help her in her tasks. I love to. They are such fun! It is just like playing house. Only Primrose does it all so quickly and well, just like a grown-up; it is quite wonderful. I love to help her and I know it does me good, too. Primrose taught me to make a bed much better than Fräulein ever did, and now I can turn flap-jacks and dust books without making clouds. Besides getting cresses and sassafras and pennyroyal and all the lovely outdoor things that Primrose does! I just know I won't wear out my welcome with her; for she never could with me."

"You are right, my dear. That's a part of friendship, wanting to be together. Friendship is just sharing. That is why I am so happy about you and Bob; you are friends as well as loving sister and brother."

"Who wouldn't be friends with Bobbles, Mother? I'm so glad and thankful that he is safe and that the storm didn't hurt him. I thought I valued him all I could; but I believe I love him even more now. You know, Mother, I've seen some big brothers that aren't good for anything but teasing their sisters."

"You are right to appreciate Robert. But I think he has a pretty sweet little sister, too. There's something in that."

Betty gave her mother a happy kiss. She loved to be praised by Mrs. Anderson because she knew that her words were always very careful and sincere.

"Rob has been proud and fond of you from the very beginning," her mother went on. "The day that you walked your first steps alone—Bob was just a lad—he telephoned to our friends and neighbors and proudly told them about it. It was a joke in the neighborhood for years. 'I thought you'd want to hear the news,' he said to them. And every little while for months afterward, old Mr. Rowland used to call Bob up on the 'phone and ask him, 'Any news, to-day, Robert?'"

Betty laughed.

"Yes; and once when I was a mite and Bob took me with him and some other fellows in the pony wagon, one of the big boys said—right out loud, as if little girls were deaf or had no feelings—'Don't you hate to have the Kid tagging behind you?' And Bob said, 'Betty never tags behind. She doesn't have to, because I take her with me.' Well, I'll go get some everlasting for a pillow for Mrs. Althorpe. Somebody told

her they were good for headaches. They are beautiful up on Pennyroyal Peak where the sheep are—great big, white, full sprays and lots of them. I do hope that Miss Connie will be in the room when I bring them home, and not Mrs. Althorpe. I love Miss Connie, but I'm really a little bit afraid of her grandmother. Mrs. Althorpe is so very straight-up-and-down, and so very chilly."

Mrs. Anderson laughed. She could not deny

that Mrs. Althorpe had a frigid manner.

"Miss Connie is so different," said Betty. "I enjoy being with her. And I love to go into her room. She's made it so pretty, like a real room and not at all like a hotel. Only,"—Betty sighed a little—"when I'm there I almost have to hold my hands about my face like the blinders that horses wear, to keep my eyes from the picture of Primrose's mother on Miss Connie's table. Well, good-bye, Mother. I'm going for the everlastings."

It did not take Betty long to go down the main road and through the thistle-filled old pasture and to cross the quiet little brown stream trickling over its stones and to climb the rocky hill where the sheep were grazing. The sunny hillside was fragrant with the pennyroyal that gave it its name and white with great clumps of the everlasting blooms. "The masses of everlasting look so much like the sheep I can scarcely tell them apart," thought Betty. "Wouldn't Mrs. Althorpe be surprised if I picked her a sheep by mistake!"

She laughed aloud, picturing Mrs. Althorpe's

expression.

"Mrs. Althorpe's so very proper, though," she continued, playing with the thought, "that maybe she wouldn't show any surprise at all. I guess she'd say politely, 'Thank you, Elizabeth, I have always desired a sheep.'"

Startled by her laughter, the big ram turned his head inquiringly and regarded Betty with grave suspicion. But when the tawny shepherd dog, Rover, whom she knew well, came bounding forward to welcome her with happy barks and waves of his plumy white tail, the ram was reassured and turned away again.

It was pleasant on the sunny hillside and Betty gathered all the everlasting blooms she could hold in both arms.

She made a pretty picture in her red frock and broad white hat with her arms full of the flowers, and the people she passed on the road as she went homeward stopped to smile at her. But the things they liked best of all were Betty's happy face and polite, gay little greetings.

Betty found Mrs. Althorpe and Miss Connie

on the porch when she reached the hotel. She made her little curtsy and presented the flowers to Mrs. Althorpe.

That coldly correct old lady said, "Thank you, Elizabeth. I have greatly wished for some everlasting." And that reminded Betty of her thought about the sheep and she could hardly keep from laughing.

"I'm going upstairs, now," said Miss Connie, "to put these bluebells in water. I'll take the everlastings, too."

"Please let me carry them up for you," said Betty, who loved to be with Miss Connie.

Betty spread sprays of everlasting out to dry on the window ledge, while Miss Connie put her bluebells in water in a small opal-tinted vase. When they were all arranged Miss Connie placed the vase on the little table so that the bluebells hung over the miniature of Primrose Garland's mother.

Betty tried hard not to watch her. She always turned around to look at the books or out of the window when Miss Connie went near that table. She was so afraid of staring. But this time she could not help throwing a quick glance or two back at the picture. She did not get her eyes away quite as quickly as she wished, and

Miss Connie saw her interest and said, "Isn't that a charming face?"

Betty's heart almost stopped beating.

"Lovely!" she managed to say, afraid that her

trembling voice would betray her.

"Bluebells seem to go with that miniature—as they did with the original of it," said Miss Connie. "She looked like them, with her deep blue eyes and the blues she used to wear, and she loved them, too."

Betty said nothing. She did not know what to say. She could feel her cheeks burning hot. She did not know whether she hoped or whether she feared that Miss Connie would say more.

Miss Connie, quite unconscious of Betty's excitement, continued, "It is the picture of a cousin of mine who died—though she is always alive to us. She was so bright and happy that we cannot think about her sadly now, but know that all is well with her and with us. My Cousin Primula—she was like an older sister to me."

"Primula!" thought the astounded Betty. "The fancy name that Bob said meant Primrose! Oh! Now I am surer than sure it is the picture of Primrose's mother."

Betty's head went round in a whirl. So Miss Connie was Primrose Garland's cousin!

Betty simply couldn't get over it.

Miss Connie and Primrose cousins! And Miss Connie not to know that Primrose was right up the mountain! When Betty thought of that she could not stay in Miss Connie's room a moment longer. She kissed her and fairly ran out to find her mother.

Mrs. Anderson saw at once that something exciting was on her little daughter's mind; so she left the other guests in the sitting-room and walked up and down under the trees with Betty, who poured out all her thrilling news.

Mrs. Anderson gently calmed her excitement and spoke to her a long time about secrets, how it is better not to have any of our own if we can help it, and how it is our duty to respect the secrets of others.

Betty heaved a sigh.

"I do not like secrets or strangenesses at all," said frank, open-hearted little Betty, "and I know I shall burst if this one doesn't clear up soon."

"Let us forget the strangeness," said Mrs. Anderson, "and think only about the joys we are having."

"Yes. Primrose says, 'Gather ye roses while ye may.' So I will. And I surely have a lovely one to gather now. Only think! I am going to spend the night—the night—the night—up

the mountain!" Betty danced a little jig of pleasure.

"Do you think it will rain to-night, Mother?" she asked anxiously. "It rained a wee bit last night. I heard it tip-tapping on the tin roof; and the smell of the pines was all goody when I woke this morning. When I first went to the window I was afraid we were going to have more, for the early sky was quite dark. But Joe Silver once told me that if there is enough blue in the sky to make a Dutchman's breeches it will clear up. And there was—more than enough."

"Well, it certainly did clear up, dear. Joe was right so far. It is a brilliant day and the night will doubtless be as good."

When the evening came at last—and it seemed to the eager Betty as if it never would come—it was indeed beautiful, pale blue and starry. The moonlight began early and was bright even while the daylight was still in the sky.

After dinner Betty slipped out of the back door to meet Joe Silver, who was to escort her to Primrose's. She did not want to go through the front entrance and have all the people on the porch ask her where she was going.

It always embarrassed and troubled Betty when they asked her that when she was on her way to Primrose's. She always answered, "To see a little girl Joe Silver knows." That was quite true, of course; but frank, honest little Betty always felt secret and deceitful when she said only that and no more. Of course, she could not tell the whole truth and betray Mr. Garland's confidence.

Slipping out of the back door in the dusk and going up the mountain in the evening light seemed lovely and mysterious and "fairy princessy," Betty thought. The fireflies helped to make it seem so, and the soft little chirrups of nesting birds added to the charm.

Joe Silver liked it too. Every little while he looked down at Betty and chuckled as if he were pleased with himself for having brought about the little girls' friendship.

He did not say a word until they were well up the Job Road. Then he stood still a moment in an open place, full of late evening glow and early moonlight. Betty stopped too and lifted her face inquiringly. She understood Joe Silver well enough now to know that he would speak in time if she waited quietly.

After a while he said, just as if they were still talking together for the first time about Primrose, "To help somebody, I think you said? Wasn't that it? That you wanted somebody to help?"

Betty replied, "Yes, Joe."

And he said slowly, "W-e-ll?" and began walk-

ing on again.

Betty followed with her forehead puckered in perplexity. She wondered what he meant. But he would not say any more. Only once in a while he turned and looked at her in a strange, steady way.

And all of a sudden Betty knew.

He meant that she had not really helped Primrose at all. Of course, it was nice for Primrose to have a little friend, but, then, it was just as nice for Betty herself. And Joe was thinking that when Betty went home again it might not be any easier for Primrose that they had been together all summer. It might even be harder. Betty did not like the thought, but she could see that it was true.

So Betty asked, very seriously, "What do you think I should do, Joe?"

He chuckled, "A quick little puss! A pretty quick little puss!" And, after a long while he answered, "Do? Why, whatever is to be done, I guess. Whatever is needed."

Then he showed Betty a little owl just "getting up for the night," and said no more about the Garlands.

Though, of course, Betty was interested in the little owl, she could not stop thinking about Prim-

rose and how she could help her. She thought and thought and thought and said over and over to herself, "What does Primrose most need? What does Primrose most need?"

At last she ventured timidly, "Joe?"

And he answered, "Hum-m?"

And Betty said, "To come down off the mountain and live like folks, I guess."

Joe Silver put back his head and laughed and laughed. He laughed long and hard. Betty thought she had never seen anybody quite so pleased. But he never said a single word to her.

"That is what Primrose most needs," thought Betty in her loving, earnest heart. "And I do want to help her. So I shall have to think and pray about it. For I do not see a single way now to help her to get back to the world."

Primrose and Amico were waiting for Betty half-way up the mountain. Primrose's voice was not quite as gay as usual and, when they were close enough, Betty could see even in the dusk that Primrose had been crying. Amico seemed to know it, too, for he kept specially close to her and licked her hand lovingly much oftener than he usually did. Betty noticed that it seemed to comfort Primrose, for she smiled every time. So Betty just said nothing, but took Primrose's other

hand and squeezed and patted it, following Amico's example.

Joe Silver left the little girls at Primrose's pri-

vate path.

Betty could see that Primrose did not feel like talking just then, so she did not speak to her at all.

They came along together quietly, holding

hands in silent understanding.

The moss was so very soft that you could not even hear their footfalls.

Then, in the silence, they saw a wonderful sight.

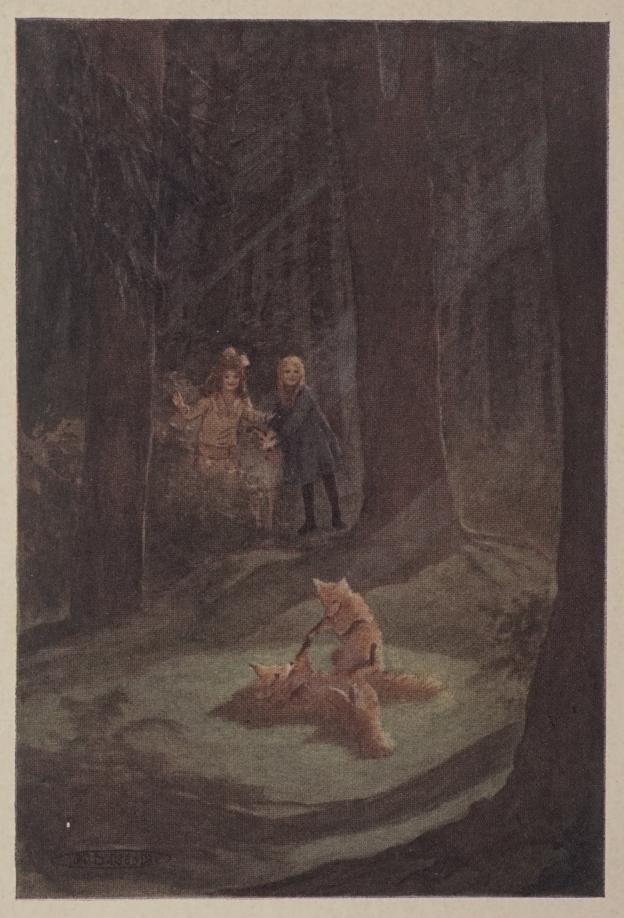
The moon had grown very bright and cast ribbons of light through the trees. Just where the line of forest stopped at the Garlands' little clearing, on a sort of terrace, everything seemed to glow with creamy light. The air looked like the inside of a pearl.

And in the brightest spot were two tiny baby foxes playing in the moonlight!

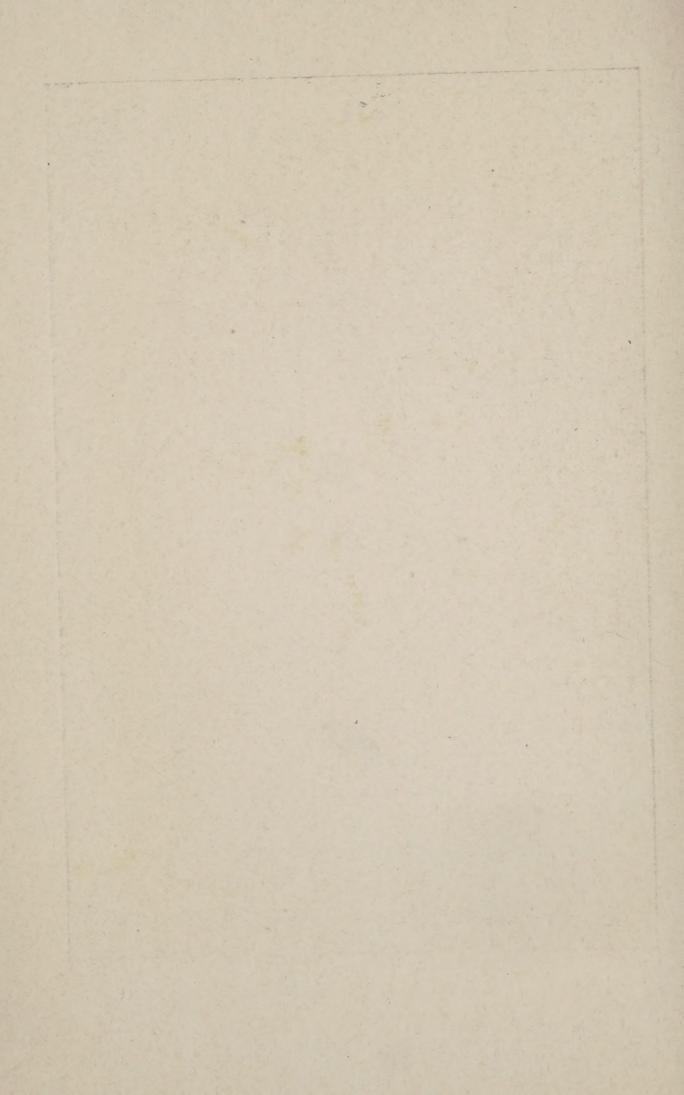
They played like kittens or puppies, only friskier and gayer and lighter.

They were lovely little cubs. Their tails were so fluffy and their noses were quivery and impudent and they were the wildest, freest things Betty had ever seen.

Primrose held Amico back and put her hand over his nose. They were all three as still as



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could be. But, in just a few seconds, the fox cubs scented them and ran away.

The girls laughed with pleasure.

"Weren't they dear? And didn't they just scoot!" said Betty. "They needn't have feared us. I'm sure we wouldn't have hurt them."

"No, indeed," said Primrose; "I cannot imagine how anyone could want to kill the wild things who had seen them when they were really wild and free and happy and not scared or running or fighting and hating their hunters."

By that time the cottage was in sight. Mr. Garland stood in the doorway to greet them. He leaned very heavily on his cane. He could

scarcely hop about: his foot hurt him so.

"He fell over some stones a few months ago," Primrose told Betty in a whisper, "and strained some tendons. And he will not see a doctor, as Joe and I beg him to; but just takes care of it himself. And it doesn't get better quickly at all and I am so worried. That is why I had been crying just before you came."

Mr. Garland was very brave and cheery and

pretended that his foot did not hurt at all.

They sat by the crackling log fire that brightened up the little cabin, and roasted nuts and apples and themselves. Mr. Garland sat in the rustic chair with his foot on a pillow and Primrose and Betty sat on the rug before him.

While they were eating the nuts and apples he

told them delightful stories.

The one that Betty liked best—and it helped her afterward, as you shall see—was about a little girl named Balaustion, which means Wild Pomegranate Flower.

"This little girl with the lovely name," said Mr. Garland, "lived in Rhodes, long, long ago, when all the Greek world was at war because the great cities, Athens and Sparta, were fighting each other for the control of Greece. Athens was the home of poetry and art and everything beautiful, and the people of Rhodes, where Balaustion lived, loved it better than the severe and warlike Sparta. They were either Athenians themselves or the friends and allies of the Athenians. They had pledged their word to help Athens all that they could. But they became frightened of the Spartans and changed their allegiance. They gave up their old friendship for Athens and, through fear, promised the Spartans aid. This seemed a shameful thing to Balaustion. So, like a long-ago Joan of Arc, she roused the Athenian patriotsthose who were most loyal in their hearts-and so stirred many of them that they took a ship and set sail for Athens, braving many perils to

do so. At last a terrible storm and more terrible pirates drove the ship ashore at Syracuse. The sailors and all the poor Rhodesians would have given up all hope and perished before they reached the shore if they had not kept their spirits up by a brave Athenian song.

"But—alas!—that very song nearly cost them their lives. For the city of Syracuse, where they made landing, was then a Spartan stronghold; and the Syracusans threatened to cast the poor Rhodesians back upon the pirates and the storm because they had been singing an Athenian song.

"Then Balaustion saved them in the most mar-

velous way. By knowing a poem!

"You see, the whole world was enraptured just then with the works of the great poet Euripides.

> Euripides the human, With droppings of warm tears!

"That is what he has been called because his words stirred hearts to tenderness. People loved to hear his poems more than we love to hear the most beautiful music. You see, there were no printed books like ours, and people had to hear poetry from the lips of those who had learned it by heart—instead of reading it for themselves

as we do. And the Syracusans hardly ever had a chance to hear Euripides.

"Some one spoke of him while the discussion as to what should be done to the poor Rhodesians was going on, and the captain of the ship told the Syracusans that Balaustion knew Euripides' poems so well that little pieces of them kept falling from her lips thick as snow flakes.

"They put aside their unkind intentions for a time and begged Balaustion to speak some of the

poetry of Euripides to them.

"Wild Pomegranate Flower was not a bit frightened by all the strange and angry or unfriendly faces. She trusted Euripides to soften their hearts. She told them a whole play—gladly repeated to them every word of the poet's tenderest, most beautiful play and brought the beauty of loving kindness home to them so deeply that they turned into friends instead of enemies. All by a poem!"

"It is wonderful," said Betty, "and very strange, too, that she could do so much only by a poet's help."

Mr. Garland laughed and said, "That is because

Hearts are hearts And poetry is power. That is the way Browning explains it, and Browning is the English poet who wrote about Balaustion."

"I think Balaustion's courage was power, too," said Betty.

They sat quietly thinking over the story and in her secret heart Betty made a great resolution. She made up her mind to have faith and courage like Balaustion and to make herself brave enough, just as soon as she could, to see if something could not be done to get Primrose and her father down from the mountain and to do it, whatever it was.

The first thing to be done was to find out what mysterious cause was keeping them there. Her father knew and she would ask him, frankly, to tell her. Then she would do what had to be done, as Joe had said. There must be some way, surely.

It was a very big resolution for a little girl to take, to try to regulate and help the troubles of a grown-up man, of which she knew nothing. It made Betty tremble to think of it. She was glad that she did not have to begin right away.

"I love your stories. They're just splendid!" she told Mr. Garland, and Primrose said, in her quaint way, "I am so sure that every girl would love my wondrous life with this gifted father."

Mr. Garland was touched and pleased at that

and he bent down and kissed Primrose's forehead and said, "Dear little woman!"

Betty thought it sweet, but very strange, and opened her eyes so wide that Mr. Garland asked,

"What are you thinking, Brown Eyes?"

Betty blushed and laughed but answered frankly, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Garland; but I couldn't help thinking how much you and Primrose talk like people in a book. And I couldn't help smiling to think how astonished you and Primrose would be to hear father say to me, as he did this very morning, 'Come here, you little rapscallion, and hug your poor old Dad!"

Mr. Garland laughed heartily and pinched Betty's cheek, as he said, "Well, it all means the

same thing; doesn't it, Double Dimple?"

He had a lot of funny names for Betty and she liked them.

Soon it was time for bed. Betty said it was "the fairy-est" going to bed she had ever known.

For the little girls slept outdoors on a balsam bed, under a little lean-to of balsam boughs that Joe Silver had made for them that day. They were wrapped up well and snugly and were quite safe; for the wee lean-to was just outside of the window of Primrose's room and Amico lay in sight of them.

Oh! It was the sweetest night, all smelling of

woods and full of stars and the sounds of insects and running water!

Betty stretched out on the balsam bed with a

little gasp of delight.

"What does it make you think of, Primrose?" she asked. "It makes me think we are Babes in the Wood—only happy ones, with nothing to be afraid of."

And Primrose said, "It makes me think of the poet's line:

She walks in beauty like the night."

Betty laughed.

"I think that is just about the difference between you and me, Primrose," she said.

Betty lay awake a long while, enjoying the beauty of the night and thinking of all the important events of the wonderful day: the mystery of Miss Connie's being Primrose's cousin, Joe Silver's warning to Betty that something should be done by her for Primrose, and her own serious resolution.

"I wish Bob were here to advise me," she thought. "Bob always knows what to do. Well, anyway, I can try to think just what Bob would do if he were here, and do that. I can say, as Primrose would, 'I'm sure that any girl would

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love my gifted brother.' Anyway, I do. And I'm going to make my Kind Adventure really helpful, as he is making his. I will try to be brave like Balaustion."

Soon all the joys and all the puzzles were forgotten in the soothing slumbers of the summer night.

#### CHAPTER XI

#### TWO LETTERS AND SOME HOPE

BETTY ANDERSON was not the sort of girl to fret and worry, but she could not help having little qualms of anxiety now and then about Robert—she did so hope that he would feel no ill effects of his strenuous adventure in the storm.

Therefore, when she heard the driver who brought up the mail call out, "Miss Elizabeth Anderson!" she tore downstairs eagerly and met him in the hall.

Mrs. Anderson was already reading her own letters. She understood the reason for Betty's special haste and looked up and said, "All right, daughter! I have a letter from Robert; he is well and happy."

Betty heaved a little sigh of relief and gratitude.

"I hope I have one from him, too," she said. And in another moment she gave a little squeak of pleasure. "Oh, Mother!" she cried out. "He's written me two—two in one day! Something interesting must be happening."

She took her precious letters to her favorite sunny corner of the porch and sat in the hammock and read:

### CAPE WILDWIND, August 24th.

BETTY MINE,

The weather and all else have calmed down wonderfully and the sea and sky look so bright and placed that if I did not know what I do about them I might believe that they never could kick up a rumpus.

I was pretty well shaken up by my experience in the storm and very glad to lie around on the sand and loaf for a day or two. Mother Candor has made me stay at her house for a little while, and indeed I should have been pestered to death if she had not. For everybody in the hotel—everybody on the coast of the great Atlantic, I believe—wanted to ask me about the storm, the wreck, the rescue, and how I felt and what I thought and ever so many other things. And I just wanted to say, "Let me alone, do!" I sympathized with the poor babies who are joggled and "amused" when all they want is solitude and reflection.

At last the good Candors succeeded in pro-

tecting me well from everybody but one chubby little boy.

They did not have the heart to drive him away, for he was so charming.

"Are you wet?" asked he.

"Not now," I replied.

"Was you awful wet?"

"Very."

"O dear! Wisht I was you. I love to be wet." Then, after a while, "Is the poor man dead?" "Oh, no. He's getting better every day."

"Why did he jump on his head?"

This was explained.

"If I fetch you a soft, soft hanky and a little bottle of cologne, will you put it on his head? My mamma always puts one on hers when it hurts her."

"Thank you very much. But you need not trouble. The doctor is making his head well as fast as can be."

"Well, this makes heads well fast. It always makes my mamma's well, really. And feels all goody. And I know it makes heads all better fast, 'cause once my kitten wouldn't play and I thinked maybe he had a headache—'cause my mamma always plays except when she has one—and I putted a little cologne and a soft hanky on

kitty's head and he got well right away and ran off, quick, quick, quick!"

"Ah, but you see, we do not wish our poor man

to run off quick."

"Why?"

This was not easy to answer.

"Why—because—well, we'd like to talk to him a little bit and get to know him better."

"Oh! What do you want to tell the poor man?"

And so the little interrogation point kept on throughout the day, very engaging and polite, but most disturbing when one was yearning to rest.

At last Mother Candor bribed him with goodies and took him away, still asking questions. The last one I heard as his voice trailed off was, "And have you got any of those little, roundy, browndy things—I think they call them 'coo—ookies'?"

I could tell him that she has, indeed. She is a regular fairy godmother for goodies. I shall be quite spoiled by them before I return to the hotel to-morrow.

Our sick sailor—the "poor man who jumped on his head"—is getting better. His face is still badly torn and swollen and he is not always awake and does not always realize where he is or what has happened. But he is recovering rapidly. The doctor is proud of him and we are

all thankful. For he had a blow that might well have killed him.

The other rescued sailors showed an interest in him that proved him a popular man. It was more than "kindly inquiry." They seemed to care intensely about his recovery and would not leave Wildwind until they were entirely sure that he was "going to make the near shore and not the far one," as one of them put it.

They have all departed now, leaving him in good hands, you may be sure. They said such grateful things to the Candors that Mother Candor cried out with shining eyes, "Oh! Do hush, my dear boys!" and the Captain turned and fled. For to him they owe their lives and they were constantly seeking quiet ways of showing him that they appreciated it.

Mother Candor asked every one of them whether he had known her John, but none of them had ever run across him. She is always looking out for some hint that will lead to the finding of John's baby.

"If only I could meet some shipmate of his or some friend who had seen him during his last days!" she says. "Someone to whom he might have said at what port his wife and baby were to have met him!"

She feels certain that someone must have taken

care of the baby after its mother's death—for they have no doubt that the mother must have died, since they have never heard from her—and Mother Candor thinks that if she could only get a starting point she could trace the present whereabouts of John's child. She is very stout-hearted; she has not a doubt that it is possible to find her grandchild even after so many years.

She has some hope of getting news of value from our own sailor—the semi-conscious man

who is still here.

For his name is Timothy Andrews, and John had a shipmate and friend called "Big Tim Andrews," of whom he often spoke. The Candors have tried several times to locate him, without success. John's Tim had red hair. And this big fellow's hair is so red that it fairly crackles.

Dear little lady! She is trying not to hope too

much, for fear of another disappointment.

But every little while, she says, "He is big and red; now, isn't he?"

May he prove to be John Candor's Tim!

Here's a breeze blowing landward. I put a kiss on it for you. Your

Вов.

"I know they must have found out something! I just know it!" Betty said, as she eagerly tore

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open the second letter. She saw that she was right, in the very first sentence:

### CAPE WILDWIND, August 24th.

O BETTY!

I just had to write again, "the very same day," for something radiant has happened.

Our wounded sailor is John Candor's "Big

Tim Andrews!"

That is all we know as yet; but the rest may be close at hand.

Mother Candor is going about beaming as if she had a light inside of her. She scarcely hopes for anything very definite. But some hint, some beginning, some foundation on which to build a successful search—she cannot help letting herself hope for that.

It was my wicked disobedience and defiance of the doctor's orders that brought "Big Tim's" identity to light. I am quite proud and haughty about it—though my conduct was really very dreadful and I hope no small sister of mine will follow its example. Hem!

Oh! I just couldn't help it, honey!

Every time Andrews regained consciousness he keeps doing so more and more frequently and for longer and longer at a time as he grows better—Mother Candor would ask the doctor timidly, "May I question him now? Just one little question? Just whether he knew my son?" And Doctor Blake would shake his head, reluctantly but firmly, and command, "Not yet. Patience a little longer!"

A little while ago I was sitting alone at Andrews' bedside, and he opened his eyes intelligently and smiled—he has a wonderful smile, more mirthful and "catching" than any other I have seen—and said feebly, "Here I come, up to the surface again!"

Moved by a sudden impulse, I took a photograph of John from the mantel-shelf and placed it on the bedside table right in line with his glance.

"Hullo, old Jack Candor!" he murmured and closed his eyes.

I deserted my patient, on a run, and brought the news to Mother Candor.

The expression of her face will be one of the great memories of my life. Doctor Blake will probably be furious; but Andrews seems no worse. And I confess I glory in my misdeed.

Your reprehensible brother,

Вов.

"Isn't that thrilling!" exclaimed Betty. "Wasn't Bob clever to think of the picture?" she

thought. "And I'm sure it won't hurt Tim Andrews a bit. Oh! I do hope he will be able to give dear Mother Candor some good news. But I can't help hoping, too, that Bob will have a part in finding their grandchild, for I know he'd just love to. Well! I promised Miss Connie Althorpe and her grandmother that I'd help them strip balsam for a pillow, so I must. I hope it will be very sweet smelly and that they'll let me strip the juicy branches. I think they will, because those are the ones that get your hands so black and ladies don't like them. But I do, because those are the branches that smell all goody."

So Betty went into the house to share her letters with her mother and to get her sharp little knife for the sweet and woodsy task before her.

#### CHAPTER XII

#### THE OLD WOMAN UNDER THE HILL

O NE evening after dinner, as Betty walked up and down the porch with Miss Connie, she felt some one looking at her.

She glanced up and saw Joe Silver, standing in one of the dining-room windows that opened on to the porch. He stood in the shadow and she could not see him very well; but, as she passed the window, she looked more closely and saw that he was beckoning to her cautiously.

Betty excused herself to Miss Connie and went back into the big brick-paved kitchen where Joe always sat in the evening. He smiled his slow smile of pleasure as she entered and said, "When you go out to-morrow bring your sewing with you."

If Betty had not known Joe so well, and understood his peculiarities, she might have asked, "Why?" or "What for?" or some other question. But she realized that the guide had already made rather a long speech for him, so she just replied, "Thank you, Joe. I will," and went back to Miss

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Connie, leaving Joe Silver smiling to himself and shaking his head approvingly.

Betty thought a good deal about Joe's advice,

however.

"I suppose that Primrose has some mending to do and is going to let me help her," she said to her mother that night when she had gone into her room to tell her of Joe's message. "How very grown-up that will seem! But I'm afraid Primrose won't think much of my sewing. You ought to see hers, mother! All the stitches are straight and even, and there are no knots or ravels or little bloodstains to show where you have stuck your finger, or anything!"

"Well, dear, you know what Father always says: Having to is the best teacher! Have you all the sewing things that you need in your little bag, Betty? Perhaps you'd best see and get it all ready now, for you'll want to be off early in the

morning, I'm sure."

"I'm not to go up until the afternoon, dear. But I guess I had better get everything ready now, as you do, and not be a last-minuter," said Betty. "I have my needles and emery-bag and scissors and little blue celluloid thimble; there's a little hole in that where I bit it, but that doesn't matter; I can turn it inside. But I have no thread except embroidery silk, because I am making a

doiley. I'm going to take my doiley along, in case Primrose only wants to have a little sewing-bee. But I suppose I ought to take some plain thread and buttons and tape and things, in case she wants to make anything solid, or to mend anything."

"I think so, decidedly, my dear," said Mrs. Anderson, and gave Betty the more practical things

that might be needed.

Betty ran off with them and put them into her gorgeous silk sewing-bag. She was very proud of this beautiful bag. She had received it for Christmas, and it was of orange-colored silk, all embroidered in gold and pale yellow. Betty called it "Sunshine" and the name seemed to fit it.

With "Sunshine," properly fitted out, on her arm, and sunshine in her heart and in her bright face, too, Betty started up the mountain the next day.

Primrose and Amico met her at the head of the trail.

Primrose had a little rush basket on her arm, neatly filled with her sewing things; and Betty thought that its business-like appearance made her lovely "Sunshine" seem very frivolous, indeed.

But Primrose admired the sunshiny bag greatly.

"What a beautiful bag!" she said, after she

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had kissed and welcomed Betty. "But I don't see how you can sew when it's around. I should be looking at it all the time!"

"Well, you see, Primrose, I can't sew very well, whether I have it or not," laughed Betty.

"So it doesn't much matter."

"Well, then, you're just ready to go with me to-day," said Primrose, smiling, "because we are going to take a sewing lesson now."

Betty was filled with curiosity. A sewing lesson! She had never seen any woman at Primrose's and had never known her to go to anybody's house. She wondered where they could be going to take the lesson and from whom.

"Who is coming to give us the lesson?" she

asked.

"No one is coming. We are going to the teacher. This is the trail," and Primrose turned in the direction opposite the hidden path that led to her house and followed a new trail that crossed the brook and went obliquely down the mountain toward Split Rock.

"I usually wait until later in the season before I begin my lessons," said Primrose. "Then all the summer visitors have gone. I take them every autumn. But Father needs some new shirts dreadfully; and I tried to make them and they were not good. They were all—what is that

funny word you use, Betty?—Oh, yes—'higgledypiggledy.' So I have to take a lesson to-day to get them straight."

"Sometimes, when you tell me about all your duties, and all the grown-up things you do, Primrose, it makes me feel as if I were not very useful to my family and I always wish that I had been more willing and helpful," said Betty.

"Dear Betty," said Primrose, "I'm sure you are useful and helpful to everybody who knows you. I'm very certain that you are so to me."

"I wish I could be, Primrose!" said Betty with a little sigh as she thought of her difficult resolution.

"Why, you are. This has been the gladdest summer of my life. And, as for knowing how to sew—anybody could learn who had my teacher."

"Do you think she'll mind my coming to the lesson?"

"Oh, no! Indeed not. Joe said she told him that she'd be delighted. My teacher is a little old lady who lives under Split Rock Mountain."

Betty laughed at that and sang:

There was an old woman lived under a hill, And, if she's not dead, she's living there still; Baked apples she sells and cranberry pies, And she's the old woman who never tells lies.

Then Primrose laughed, too, harder than Betty had ever seen her laugh before. She could scarcely speak to say, "O Betty, that is so exactly like her! I never thought of it before. She does live under the hill and she is like all the rest of it, too. Only, instead of baked apples and pies, it's pickles she sells and barrels of raw apples. But she never, never tells lies. She always says exactly what she thinks, whether people like to hear it or not. Father calls her The-Truth-the-Whole-Truth-and-Nothing-but-the-Truth. And as for 'living there still,' everybody has begged and implored her to move away from the little hut at the base of the hill, but she will not. She always says, 'H'm. When I go away from this mountain I'll have to be fetched away.' So it's quite true that 'if she's not dead, she's living there still."

Betty laughed with Primrose and said that she was very eager to see her.

"You must not mind if she speaks rather curtly," said Primrose. "She usually does speak so. And you must speak very loud, because she is deaf. That is one reason people wish her to move nearer the settlement—because she is all alone there and she is no longer young. But she will not, even in the winter. She says she has never been afraid, all her life, and she is certainly not going to begin when she's this old, and has been safe all the time. She grew deaf, they say, from living so close to the falls and having their rumble and roar constantly in her ears."

"Really? I shouldn't think she'd love them so much, then," said Betty. "Oh, yes, I would, though!" she hastened to correct herself. "For they are so lovely. And it is always so hard to leave them and go home again. They just seem to charm you, like witches in fairy tales. You look—and—look—and see something different every time."

"Yes, indeed," Primrose said; "I'm glad you love them, too, Betty. I can understand how people long ago used to imagine that nymphs and other fairy, witching creatures lived in waterfalls. For they do charm and hold you, like looking in the firelight in winter—only much more glorious!"

While they were praising the falls they began to hear them, and Betty said, "Listen! They are saying, 'Thank you for the compliment!'"

As the girls came down the trail toward the falls it grew very steep and rocky. They had to move most carefully and hold on to the branches and even sit down and slide on the pineneedles in some places.

Amico, who had followed them, as he always

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did, did not approve of their going that way at all. He barked warningly as if he objected very much and shook his head and ran back toward the road and tried his best to show them that there was a much easier way of going.

"He seems to be telling us to have more sense

and go by the road," said Betty.

"We usually do go by the road in the autumn," said Primrose, "when the summer visitors have gone to their homes. But now, while they are here, I know my father would prefer to have me take 'the untrodden ways.'"

Betty said nothing. But she grew grave and thought, "O dear! I wonder why. There's that horrid mystery again."

When they came to a place so slippery and steep that they had to go over the pine-needles on their hands and knees, Amico made one last stand against what seemed to him the little girls' foolishness and stupidity. He expostulated with them as urgently as a gentleman could; then, seeing that it was no use, he just made up his mind to accept it as another example of the folly of human beings, and followed them in silent scorn.

The woods were full of little birds and chipmunks and squirrels and partridges and once they found the tracks of deer in the wintergreen

vines.

Then Primrose stopped and carefully destroyed the tracks.

"What are you doing?" Betty asked.

"Covering up the deer tracks. I always do, to keep the hunters from seeing them and following and killing the poor creatures. It is not the open season, and there is no hunting allowed. But there will be soon. And, anyway, covering up deer-tracks is a habit with me. I am always unhappy while there is hunting. For there is nothing so gay and gentle as a deer. And as for eating them—why, Betty, I'd just as soon eat you!"

"Oh-h! Please don't eat me, Primrose!" Betty begged, and that set them laughing again.

The path went down under some dark, closely set fir-trees and through a damp little cavern. Then it made a sudden turn and came out almost under the falls.

Betty gave a cry of delight. She said it was "very magic" to see them from behind like that. They were full of a million rainbows and so noisy that you had to shout to be heard.

The path turned again, through a slippy, gorgy, rocky place and into a broad, sunny meadow, with lots of apple-trees in it. The meadow was sweet with fragrant grasses and clover. Primrose and

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Betty each plucked a big purple clover blossom and sucked the honey.

"Um-m!" said Betty. "I don't wonder the bees

love them. Do you?"

"No, indeed," answered Primrose. "We are like one of Shakespeare's fairies, Betty, who said, 'Where the bee sips, there sip I.'"

There were a great many honey-bees about and a beehive was set on a box under one of the trees.

On the outer edge of the meadow, under the largest apple-tree, was a tiny house. There was a great big cucumber patch beside it. And all around the house were little stone crocks.

"I never thought there were so many little crocks in the world!" Betty exclaimed.

A little old lady in gray was busying herself among them. She wore a gray sunbonnet and moved about very quickly and sprucely.

She could not hear the little girls coming, but she felt their presence and turned sharply around.

She smiled when she saw them and came forward so briskly and was so small and sprightly that Betty thought she looked like one of her own honey-bees. It was a good thing that she smiled so pleasantly; otherwise Betty might have thought her a disagreeable person and that the honey-bee could sting. For her first words of

greeting were, "How-d'ye, Blossom! You have a comrade, I see. Glad your foolish father has learned some sense at last!"

Betty looked quickly at Primrose and was a little bit disappointed at first to see that Primrose was not at all angry. For Betty felt that she would have been very angry, indeed, if anybody had said anything horrid to her about her "Daddy." She simply wouldn't have let them.

Primrose knew what Betty was thinking and hastened to explain, "She is really very kind, Betty. That is just her way. My father thinks very highly of her. She has been a dear, good friend to him and to me. We understand each other."

The old lady was too deaf to hear what Primrose said so softly to Betty. But she must have felt it just the same; for her eyes filled with happy tears and she stooped and kissed Primrose. She did not have to stoop very far, though; for she was not much taller than the children.

"Come to take a lesson, have you?" she asked. Primrose answered in a loud voice, "Yes, ma'am. I got into trouble trying to make Father's shirts."

"H'm. You got into trouble, poor child, before you ever began to make 'em. Well, well! We'll soon get the shirts straight, at least. What's your friend's name?"

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"Elizabeth Anderson," Betty answered for herself. "But they call me Betty."

"I'll call you Elizabeth. No use having a

name if you're called something else."

Betty could hardly keep from smiling as she thought of all the names she was called, with Bob and her father making up new ones every day, and even Mr. Garland inventing names for her. But she just looked demurely at the little old lady and said nothing.

"Sit side by side on those two little boxes," said their teacher, "and get out your sewing. I'll sit on this chair before you and knit."

She took her knitting out of a big pocket in

her gray apron and began at once.

"Let's see the shirts, Primrose. I should say that was a mess! Rip it all out and start over. What are you making, Elizabeth?"

Betty showed her the little doiley. It was not very well done, she knew, and she expected criticism. But she was quite unprepared to have the old lady fold it up and put it back into the yellow bag and draw the strings tight.

"What's that bit of frippery for?" she asked, and before Betty could make a reply she went on, "To be pretty, I'll be bound. To be pretty, eh? Hoity, toity! Handsome is as handsome does!" and she flounced into the little house and brought

back a bright piece of checked gingham.

"We'll make that into a little pair of overalls," she said. "The idea of making things to put on tables, when poor little boys have nothing to wear!"

Of course, Betty's tender heart was touched by that remark.

"What poor little boy—" she called out interestedly, bouncing up from her box.

But the old lady cut her short, saying, "Never you mind, Miss Curiosity. You can do him more good by making his overalls than by hearing his business."

So Betty sat down meekly again. She could see that the old lady was not really unpleasant, for she always smiled right into your eyes when she was scolding you, and that took the sting out of her words.

Primrose was glad to see that Betty understood and was not hurt by the old lady's crustiness. "She is just like one of her sweet pickles," she explained.

The little old lady cut out the tiny overalls and showed Betty how to put them together. She was an excellent teacher, too, and Betty learned far more from her than she ever had at Miss Morgan's sewing class in the city. Primrose was

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made happy, too, by finding that she could save the shirt that the little housekeeper had been so much afraid she had spoiled.

Their teacher wouldn't let them talk at all

while they were sewing.

"Learn to sew in silence," she said, "and when you grow up you'll keep out of half the trouble there is in the world."

But she made them stop once in a while and take a run through the clover or gather and eat the early apples that hung ripe on the trees.

When the long, ruddy afternoon light began to turn the falls into flame, she said, "Trot along,

now. Lesson's over."

As Betty said, "Thank you!" and made her curtsy, the old lady gave a funny little dart forward and kissed her very kindly. Then she put one finger under Betty's chin and turned Betty's face up and looked at her, smiling.

"Nice, bright eyes and good manners!" she

said. "Come again, my dear."

"I certainly hope I may," Betty said to Primrose as they climbed up the hard trail together. "I've had such a funny, good afternoon."

"I'm so glad you liked her. She liked you, too, Betty. You can always tell about her, because she says exactly what she means."

"Yes," Betty laughed. "I noticed that."

"Don't bother to climb this hard, rocky, slippery trail with me, Betty. It is getting late and it would be much shorter for you to go home by the road."

"Hoity, toity!" said Betty in pleasant imitation of their teacher. "I came with you, Miss, and I'm going back with you. As if I'd let you go back alone, Primrose!"

At the top of the trail they bade each other good-bye and Betty went happily down the Job Road, swinging "Sunshine" and thinking of her

interesting new acquaintance.

"Robert was right when he said that people can be judged much more by what they do than by what they say," she thought. "Won't Robert laugh when he gets my letter about the sewing lesson? I must write to-morrow morning, before I forget any of the things the old lady said. I do hope I can remember them all. I'm going to begin my letter by asking, 'Do you need any overalls, Bud?' I hope Bob will be glad he has such a useful sister Elizabeth."

And Betty finished her pleasant afternoon with little chuckles of laughter.

#### CHAPTER XIII

#### WHAT TIM ANDREWS KNEW

BETTY decided to delight The Old Woman Who Lived Under the Hill by making a little suit of overalls, all by herself, and bringing them to her for the poor little boy in whom she was interested.

Mrs. Anderson bought the gingham for her in Elizabethtown.

"Please be sure to get blue," Betty directed, "for it just simply must be Little Boy Blue for whom The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill makes clothes. Really, Mother, I shouldn't be surprised to meet Bo-Peep, or any of them, at her house. Only Bo-Peep couldn't lose her sheep in this valley, when Rover and Dewey and all the other lovely shepherd-dogs are around. I saw one of the dogs drive the cows into a farmyard, the other afternoon, and then stand across the opening and make himself into a gate to keep them in, until the farmer came to close the real gate. And you can always tell when it's five

o'clock by seeing the big collie down the road dart up the hillside for his cows. I'm sure Bo-Peep would have been perfectly safe if Rover had been there. He guards his sheep so well and they obey him *perfectly*. You won't forget the gingham for the overalls, will you, Mother dear?"

Mrs. Anderson did not forget it.

She helped Betty cut out the little garment and directed the making. Betty was so interested in her work, and overalls are so easy to make, that they were soon completed.

One morning Betty started down the road with great pride in her heart and the well-made little overalls in a neat package under her arm.

It did not take her so long this time to go to the little house under Split Rock Mountain, for she did not take the steep trail, but went along the road. This was a walk that Betty loved so well that often, in the winter at home, she used to shut her eyes and say, "Now I'll walk from the Inn to the falls," and do so in her memory. The road went alongside of the little river and underneath the heavy trees when it was not crossing flowery meadows.

The little Old Woman was not at home when Betty arrived at the cottage, so she sat down on a stone beside the falls to wait.

Betty kept thinking how surprised Primrose's

sewing teacher would be and how pleased when she saw the overalls. So she kept on waiting, instead of leaving the little package at the door, as she might safely have done; for she wanted to see the Old Woman open it.

"She will laugh and say pleasant things, I'm

sure," thought Betty.

At last she saw the Old Woman coming down a little hillock, with a basketful of big blackberries out of her famous patch. Of course, polite little Betty hastened to meet her and take the basket from her, and carry it into the house.

The Old Woman looked quite alarmed when she saw Betty and asked at once, "Anything the

matter with Primrose?"

Betty shook her head and shouted, "No! No!" "What brings you here, Elizabeth?" asked the Old Woman, when they reached her cottage.

Betty thought this was scarcely the usual form of welcome, but she said, "I'll show you!" and opened her little bundle with great pride and showed her hostess the overalls.

The Old Woman Under the Hill looked at her and at them with twinkling eyes; but all she said was, "Thank you!"

Betty could not help feeling a little bit disappointed at that. She had been so sure that the Old Woman would say something agreeable about her workmanship and her thoughtfulness. She could not help letting a shade of her disappointment cross her face.

The Old Woman saw it and said, smilingly, "Come, now! Don't spoil doing-right by wanting to be praised for it."

Betty laughed, but she blushed too. For she knew that it was a fault of hers to think too much about being praised and loved for what she did.

"Do you know what is the best reward for doing kindnesses for folks?" asked the Old Woman. She went on without waiting for Betty to reply. "The best reward for doing what's right is getting in the habit of it!" she said. "Come again! Come again!"

Betty saw that she was busy, so she made her little curtsy and left her. When she was just turning beyond the trees at the spot where the road bent away from the Old Woman's meadow, she heard some one calling, "Hi! Hi!" She looked back and saw The Old Woman Who Lived Under the Hill standing on a rock and calling after her.

As she saw Betty about to return, she cried out, "Don't come back; listen! Of course, I am glad, you know. Very!" And she threw Betty a number of kisses, which surprised her most of all.

When Betty returned to the little hotel she found her father seated on the grass, with a book, under the big apple tree that gave Apple Tree Inn its name. She sat beside him and told him all about her morning's experience. Mr. Anderson laughed heartily.

"She is very wise, your little Old Woman," said he. "And very tender-hearted, too, I'm thinking, for all her sharpness of manner. Are you not going up the mountain to Primrose's to-

day?"

"I just can't go yet," said Betty. "It is the day for Robert's letter and it did not come in the regular mail this morning, and I just have to wait until the Althorpes drive back from the village to see if they are bringing it. They'd hurry up if they knew how terribly anxious I am to learn whether Tim Andrews told the Candors anything important. I've just nearly perished, all this week, about it. It's been so exciting. I don't know what I'd have done without my overalls to occupy my mind, when I was not at Primrose's. Oh! Why don't the Althorpes hurry up?"

"Perhaps they had some little thing of their own to attend to," suggested her father with a

smile.

"You're teasing!" said Betty reproachfully. "They don't know how important my letter is—

for, of course, I haven't told anybody here about the Candors. Except Primrose—for she's my best friend and I knew Bob was willing!"

"That was quite right, dear," said her father.
"I'm glad my little daughter's tongue is not hung
in the middle and loose at both ends like some
maidens'."

"Oh, yes!" said Betty. "I did tell Joe Silver about Captain Candor and Bob in the storm. But that wasn't a sacred other-folks'-businessy thing; was it, Daddy?"

"No, indeed. And, of course, we had to boast about our splendid brother to somebody," said Mr. Anderson, pinching her cheek. "Was Joe very much excited over Robert's heroism?"

"Well, you know, Father, nothing could really

excite Joe. Now, could it?"

"Not very much. Once, they say, Joe killed a very dangerous bear in the mountains at the risk of his life and when he came back with the pelt and all the boys in the hotel ran around him asking to be told all about it, Joe Silver just said quietly, 'I shot him. There's his pelt. And that's all about it.'"

"Well, I didn't expect him to be excited about Bob's storm," said Betty, "and I was not disappointed at all when he only said, 'Goo-o-d!' Besides, I could see that he was pleased. And

that night he brought me two Indian arrowheads he had found and said I should give them to my brother. Oh! I hear a horse! Oh! It is the Althorpes! Here they come!" and Betty ran forward, shouting eagerly, "Is there a letter for me, Miss Connie?"

She gave a whoop of delight when Miss Connie held one high in answer. She was so excited that she did not mind stern Mrs. Althorpe's disapproving frown, but jumped up on the carriage block to get her precious letter at the first possible moment.

"Oh, joy! It's a big, fat one, too! Thank you, Miss Connie-and Mrs. Althorpe!" and Betty darted back to her grassy seat beside her father under the big apple-tree and read:

CAPE WILDWIND, August 27th.

BETTY BRIGHT-EYES-AND-NICE-MANNERS,

I like your Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill very much. And Mother Candor does too.

And if I am to belong to this family of sailors I shall probably have need of overalls very soon. So I'm glad to have such a useful sister Elizabeth.

Dear Mother Candor was in such a fever of anxiety, waiting for Tim Andrews to be well enough to bear questioning, that I thought it best to get her away from the house as often as I could. And the good Captain, too; for he was as restless as she, for all his calm and quiet manner.

So whenever the sewing-club daughter took her turn at sitting with Tim, I bore the old folks off for a jaunt in *The Violet Dawn*.

I found a good assistant, too. I'll tell you about him.

One day we set sail over a sea as smooth as crystal and as full of lovely changing reflections. There was just about enough wind to keep the little boat gently going. As we rounded the Point, very slowly, a boy called out, "Ahoy! Captain Candor!" from the shore. A dumpy, browncheeked boy with flashing teeth and a cheery manner. He had on shabby old clothes, as neat and shining with cleanness as the sandy beach itself.

"There's Ronald Roberts," said the Captain, as he waved to the boy. "And I'm afraid he was going to our house. Hey! Ron! Were you headed for our harbor?"

"Yes, sir; I was. But that's all right. I can come another day."

"Not a bit of it, lad. We'll come in to shore for you. You come with us. You can hold the rations on your lap if you're crowded." So we took the nice boy on a little tour and picnic beyond the Point.

He was a little shy with me at first, but soon warmed up when he learned that I had been to college. He is working hard that he may go there, too, some day. His father is a minister over at Lawrence Beach and Ronald has to earn enough money to pay his own way, if he is to have a college education.

"A good thing, perhaps," said the Captain, seeking for a silver lining. "It will make him appreciate his education all the more."

But Ron laughed and said, "Honest, Captain, I don't see how anything can. I want to go so much already."

Ron's father, whom everyone hereabouts calls the Dominie and loves dearly, had sent him over to be of whatever service he could to the Candors while Tim was ill at their house. So the boy asked me—when he could get me away from the others, as we prepared luncheon in the woods—what I thought he could do. "For I'd love to be of use to them, if I can," he said. "Nobody can know what good friends they've been to us. Why, the Captain even wanted to take charge of my education. But Father thought it was better for us to try to do it ourselves."

So I told him to help me keep them diverted

and away from their eager anxiety, and he did, like a good one. He has been a fine lieutenant, and I have grown very fond of him.

We had a boys' boat race and the Captain was the judge. That interested and excited him. And he certainly was tickled because Ron won it in his old boat, the *Dominie*, through his superior seamanship, though some of the other boats, belonging to wealthy summer boarders, made his old tub look like a farm wagon among automobiles. But that is just like Ron.

He interested some of his girl friends, too, and they got up an old-fashioned oyster-fry party and put it in Mother Candor's capable hands to manage. That kept her busy and bustling.

So the time passed until—until—Oh! I write in as bouncy a state as dear chum Betty herself could achieve—until Tim Andrews spoke.

We have gotten just a little, little way on the trail of John Candor's child! We are beginning to hope at last!

That is, I dare hope, and Mother Candor always hopes. The Captain urges caution and tells us not to be too expectant. He says they have been disappointed so often when they thought they were really about to make a discovery, that he has schooled himself against too much hope.

"You see," he whispered to me, "these dis-

appointments are very bad for Mother. I have to shield her from them."

But listen, comrade, and see if you can keep from hoping.

When we came back from our cruise with Ron, day before yesterday, the day of the race, the

good doctor met us at the landing.

"I saw you coming," said he to the Candors, "and I just had to meet you. For I found my patient much better to-day and I think you may question him, Mrs. Candor, in a very few days more. I wanted to give you the news myself."

Everybody loves Mother and Captain Candor so heartily that their joys and sorrows seem the

family property of the neighborhood.

Well, Big Tim got better yesterday and talked just like anybody, and to-day his big, beauteous

smile is beaming on every one.

So this morning, by the doctor's permission, Mother Candor asked him about John. Nobody was allowed in the room during the interview except the doctor—to stop the questioning, if it seemed to hurt his patient and to take care of Mother Candor in case any severe shock came to her. The Captain waited in the next room and I stayed with him.

I never admired Captain Candor so much. When I was so anxious and excited it was easy to imagine what he must have been; but he kept his calm manner and spoke cheerfully of other things—only pressing my hand now and then as a sign of our understanding. Once, indeed, his eyes filled with tears. He was not ashamed of them, but went on frankly to explain their cause.

"I was thinking," said he, "how different John was from most men. Loving the sea and the merchant marine interests as he did and liking the rough life on the ocean better than any other sort of living, it was wonderful how book-learned he was—always learning the languages of the countries he visited and studying their history and reading their literatures and loving fine, beautiful things. And always speaking so gently, yet making his men obey him just as if he had been bluff to them! Somebody asked him once how a man so fond of fineness and beauty could follow the sea, and John said he thought the sea was the most beautiful thing of all. Maybe it is, too. Maybe 'tis."

After a while the doctor beckoned to Captain Candor and he went in to Mother Candor and Tim. And I went home, for I felt it was not a time for the intrusion of my interest.

But bless their dear old hearts! If they didn't telephone to me to come right back after luncheon, that all their "other children" were coming

then, to hear the news about John's child, and they wanted me to be among them. I felt it was just the sweetest compliment that ever came to me.

And here is the news my anxious, jumping Betty has been waiting for.

Tim Andrews had been in the very wreck in which John Candor had lost his life. He said John had been very brave and heroic; and I can well believe it. The wreck had taken place off the coast of Spain and Tim himself had been rescued with difficulty and lay long in a little Spanish town very ill, indeed. As soon as he was well enough he had thought of poor John Candor's wife and baby. John had told him where they were to have met him, and, of course, he had often spoken of Mother Candor and the Captain too.

Tim wrote to the Candors, he said, and told them where the little family was to be found, but he was not surprised that the letter had never reached them. "For," he said, with his lovely smile, "I'm not a bit an educated man, like John Candor was, and most of my writing is so hard to read, and so likely to be mixed up, that many of my letters go wrong even in my own country, let alone a little village in Pointevedra, where this was posted."

Among the things that had been saved from the wreck was John Candor's box of clothes and belongings. There was nothing of great value in it, but as Tim went reverently through his dead friend's possessions, he came across a little blue Bible that was wrapped in tissue paper as if it were carefully treasured.

It was a very hard moment for Mother Candor when they came to this part of the telling, for she had given the little book to John when he was a very young fellow going on his first voyage.

Tim left John's box in care of the Spanish family who had taken care of him, but he decided to take the Bible to John's wife and baby, who were waiting at a little English sea-coast town.

He thought it too sacred a thing to send, and besides he wanted to see if he could be of any use to them. That's the sort of a friend Timothy Andrews is!

But when he reached the little English village he learned from a kind woman who had been their neighbor that John's young wife had died. The neighbor had taken care of the sweet little baby girl until the mother of John's wife came to get it. This grandmother was an American woman living in London. Timothy asked her name and address, as he wanted to go to see her and take the little Bible to John's baby. But the kind neighbor advised him not to do so. She said she did not think that the young wife's mother would have been very glad to see him, as she had never wished her daughter to marry a sailor-you see, she did not understand what a fine, good, cultivated man John Candor was-and was not inclined to be forgiving to John or her daughter or pleasant to their friends. But this kind neighbor undertook to get the Bible to John Candor's baby and to inform the baby's grandmother of the whereabouts of John's box in Spain. She said she felt sure that the grandmother would carefully keep the Bible and give it to John's daughter when she grew big enough to cherish it, for she seemed to be a person who was just and good, although a little hard and unforgiving.

Tim thought then that he had done all that he could. He had heard no more of John Candor's child until just a year ago. Then, finding himself near the same small town in Pointevedra, he returned there to see and thank the Spanish peasants who had been so kind to the shipwrecked sailors—he certainly is a gentleman, is Timothy Andrews, even if he cannot write clearly-and they gave him some interesting news. They said that a few years before a charming young girl had come to see them. She said that she was

John Candor's daughter and that she wanted the box full of his possessions that they had kept for her for so many years.

Alas! Tim did not ask her name or her address. "Miss Candor, Europe," is not very definite, is it?

So it all seems baffling enough to me, even though I am hopeful. But to Mother Candor it has given new hope in a tremendous degree. She says they have at least something to go on—the first definite bit of news. And that makes her take hope that they may soon learn all. Mother Candor is perfectly sure that her boy's baby still lives and will be found and will love her. "I can feel it," she says.

The Candors are hopeful for another reason, too. The family has commissioned Timothy Andrews, as soon as he is well enough, to go hunting for John's daughter or for news of her. They are to pay him well, so that he can give all his time to it and run down every clew and do nothing else. Tim is as eager as they are and would gladly go for nothing if he could afford to do so. In the meantime the Captain's son, the Mayor, has written to the kindly English neighbor, asking for the address to which she sent the little blue Bible so long ago, and to the Spanish family, asking for the address to which the box was sent last year.

They scarcely dare hope that they will remember the addresses, but still they do hope it eagerly.

And this is my news, Betty. I am sure you are opening your big eyes over it, and I am sure they are swimming in sad-and-happy tears. Bless your sympathetic soul! Let us hope too. For here are love and friendship united on this search for John's daughter. How can two such great forces fail to find her whether it be on earth or in heaven?

### YOUR BIG BROTHER BOB.

Betty's eyes were full of tears, just as Robert had predicted, as she put down the letter, and there was a bright red spot in each of her cheeks.

Mr. Anderson had read the letter with her. He kept saying all the time, "Keep cool, little daughter; do!"

"Oh, I can't help being excited!" Betty gasped. "Oh, I do hope it will really be the beginning of finding the Candors' grandchild! I feel sure it will, just as Mother Candor does. I believe in her feelings, too. I know all about that, for I remember, Father, that night when you and Mother had lost your way in the woods up Deer Mountain and did not come down until long after supper time and they were getting up parties to look for you, and the maids told me lots of fright-

ening things, and, of course, I was dreadfully alarmed and could not help crying—all the time there was a little voice in my heart saying, 'It's all right, Betty. They've found the trail. They'll be home pretty soon.' And, after a while, I just had to believe it and I wasn't really scared through at all. And soon you and Mother did come. I guess that's just about how Mother Candor feels. I wish I could kiss her and tell her about it."

"Well, kiss me, Miss Greatheart," said her

father, "and let us trust and pray."

"Oh, I do, Daddy dear. I'm sure they will find her—though Europe is a pretty big place, I know. I always think so in geography class, anyway," said Betty, dimpling. "I only hope that Tim Andrews is better at finding places on the map than I am."

### CHAPTER XIV

#### BETTY MAKES UP HER MIND

WHEN Betty had folded up Bob's letter and put it in the pocket of her middy suit, Mr. Anderson expected her to kiss him good-bye and fly away, as usual.

But, instead of that, Betty kept sitting soberly beside him on the grass. Her father could see that there was something on her mind. So he put down his book and smiled at her invitingly.

"Let's go up into the summer-house and have a 'chin' where we won't be disturbed—eh, Betty?"

he said.

"You dear!" replied Betty. "You knew I

wanted one; didn't you?"

They climbed up the sand-hill back of the house and went into the little summer-house. It was lovely there; you could see down a wonderful aisle of mountains. And it was secluded too—a capital place for confidences.

Mr. Anderson took Betty on his lap and said,

"Fire away, little woman!"

"Father," said Betty then, "do you know about a little girl named Balaustion—in a poem by Mr. Browning?"

"Yes, dear," Mr. Anderson answered in some

surprise.

"Well, I've got to be as brave as she was. Because I have something terribly hard to do."

"What is it, dear? Can't Daddy help?"

"I hope you can, Daddy. That's what I have to speak to you about. It's very, very important. It's about Primrose. You see, Bob and I made a plan to be helpful to somebody this summer and Bob found the Candors and has done just heaps for them. And Joe found Primrose for me, and I love her so much. But, you see, Father, Joe thinks I haven't really done anything to help Primrose. He thinks that she will be sadder than ever and lonesomer when I've gone, and that I haven't done anything at all really-truly to help her. And I can see that he is right. And Joe thinks that the only thing that will really-truly help Primrose is to go back to living like other people and see other girls and go to schooland all. And he thinks I ought to help her to do that. And I'd love to. And so I've been thinking and thinking, and praying too. It's a very hard thing for a little girl to do-to help get the Garlands off the mountain."

"I should say so," Mr. Anderson agreed. He thought it was almost an impossible thing, but he was wise enough not to say so and discourage his little daughter in her kindly intention. For he knew that nothing that is good is really impossible.

"But, then," Betty went on, "Balaustion was only a little girl too and she saved big warriors and many people much more powerful than she was. Sometimes, though, I get scared and think it's no use and that I'm silly to try. But once Miss Connie Althorpe said that faith and love could do anything, provided they are unselfish. And I feel surely sure I have them both."

"I believe you have, indeed, my Bettykins."

"Well, then—here goes, Daddy! I've got to ask you to help me right now. I can't wait any longer—because I've got my courage up now; and it isn't very strong in its spine. It's beginning to wobble already."

"Ask me what, childy?"

"Father, please don't think it's curiosity or meddlesomeness or not minding what Mother says about other folks' secrets. But I cannot find any way to help the Garlands unless I know more about them and what makes them stay 'way up there and—"

"So you want me to tell you?"

"If you can, without betraying a trust, Daddy. If you don't think I am too little to know and to help."

Mr. Anderson sat thinking a long, long time. He stroked Betty's curls but said nothing except murmurings and the beginnings of sentences like, "It would be a wonderful thing if you could——" and, "There may be serious consequences either way——" and, "After all, have I any right——" Then he sat silent a long time more and thought deeply.

Betty tried to be patient but she couldn't help giving one of her little bounces and that brought

him to with a start.

Then he said very seriously, "I'm sorry, dear. I hate to disappoint you. Oh, don't look so forlorn, Betty! Listen to Father. You see, my dear, it is not my secret, but Mr. Garland's. He confided it to me. If he had intended you to know, doubtless he would have directed me to tell you. I hate to disappoint my girl in her friendly and kind effort, but I have no choice. No one has any choice about other folks' confidence. It cannot be betrayed, even though it may seem wise to do so. You see, Mr. Garland trusted me not to tell anybody."

Betty's eyes clouded with tears a little and her father comforted her. "I know you must be right; you always are," she said sadly, "but I did so hope you could help me help the Garlands!"

"So sorry, Betty!"

"Isn't there anyone who can tell me?"

"No one, I fear, except Mr. Garland himself. It's his secret, you know."

"O dear!" Betty sighed. "Joe Silver will be so disappointed in me. What will Joe Silver say?"

While Betty was asking that question about Joe Silver the answer to it flashed into her mind. She trembled and opened her eyes wide and said in a scared tone, "Daddy!"

"Yes, dear?"

"I know what Joe Silver would say if he heard that no one could tell me except Mr. Garland. Joe would probably say, 'We-ell?' and by that he would mean that, if nobody but Mr. Garland could tell me, I must ask Mr. Garland himself! But—oh!—Father—I couldn't! Do you think I ever could?"

"Well, think it over, honey. And I'll think it over too."

"Yes, Father. But I don't think any girl, even Balaustion herself, could be brave enough for that."

"Well, do not fret about it, dear. Perhaps we'll find a way."

"I'll try not to fret. Now I must run and wash for luncheon. And this afternoon Primrose and I are going for watercresses; that will keep me from fretting. I love to go for cresses. You have to wade in the brook, instead of asking permission as a favor of your elders," Betty chuckled roguishly; "and you roll up your skirts—'way up—and look like those pictures of gleaners and diggers and workers by Mr. Millet that you always say 'celebrate the dignity of labor.' But there isn't much dignity to it when Primrose and I do it—and not very much labor either. Just fun. Primrose says she doesn't enjoy it nearly as much without me. So maybe I am some good to her!" and Betty gave a little sigh.

As she went up to Primrose's the mountain air was so sweet and so full of life and vigor, and the little yellow birds darted by so gaily and the brook laughed so hard that Betty forgot her perplexity. She went on singing a little air that she was learning to play on Mr. Shiver Strings.

She hurried through the hidden trail, for she feared to be late, and kept thinking of the little tune all the time. That was why she did not see The Old Woman Who Lived Under the Hill until she bumped right into her.

The Old Woman had an empty basket on her arm. It was stained with blackberry juice and Betty guessed at once that she had been bringing Primrose the big berries from her blackberry patch that she had just been gathering when Betty called on her that morning.

She was very pleasant when Betty begged pardon for bumping into her, and said, "All right! All right! Little stones rolling downhill never see what's in their way; and you were going uphill just like a little stone goes down."

Betty laughed at that. She thought it very funny to be called a little stone. The Old Woman laughed too—a short, sharp little laugh. Betty thought it sounded something like the way a puppy barks when it is gay.

But then the Old Woman grew very grave and said, "Come here, Elizabeth. I've something to say to you."

Betty came quite close, for she could see it was a secret by the way the Old Woman looked carefully around before speaking. She wondered very much what the Old Woman could wish to say to her.

The Old Woman Who Lived Under the Hill took Betty's face between her hands—and how they did smell of pickle vinegar!—and looked earnestly into Betty's eyes and said, "Elizabeth,

Joe Silver told me all about you. He said you are his hope. I don't know but you are mine too. You look like a Can Person. Everybody is either a Can Person or a Can't Person. Try not to disappoint us."

Betty started to speak to her very eagerly. She knew that the Old Woman meant she expected Betty to do something to get Primrose and Mr. Garland to leave the mountain; and Betty hoped that she might give her some advice that she so needed.

But the Old Woman shook her head quickly and put her finger on her lips and said, "Not a word! Not a word! The thing to do after you hear a warning like mine is not to talk but to think!" And she hurried away without even stopping to say "good-bye."

Betty certainly did think. How could she dare ask Mr. Garland to take her into his confidence. Just a little girl! She was sure she could not.

Soon Amico's cheerful bark and Primrose's glad, "Here comes Betty!" dispelled her care. Primrose was carrying two big rush baskets, one of which she gave to Amico. At a word from her he rushed forward and gave it to Betty. And Betty was so accustomed to making her little curtsy when she said "Thank you," that she forgot and made one to Amico!

"Well, anyway," she said laughingly, "I have curtsied to lots of people who were not nearly as polite as Amico."

"Oh, Amico can bow, too!" said Primrose.

"You mean bow-wow," teased Betty.

"Just see, then!" said Primrose proudly. "Salute like a soldier!" she commanded.

Amico rose up on his hind legs and touched his head with one of his forepaws in quite a military manner.

"Salute like a civilian!" she said then; and Amico gave little short careless nods in every direction.

Betty was delighted. "He is the most wonderful dog!" she said admiringly. "He knows so many things. Every day I find out something else that he can do. He's just like you in that, Primrose."

"Well, you see," Primrose said archly, "Father teaches us both new tricks all the winter."

The rush baskets were lined with soft, moist leaves and there was a sharp little knife in the bottom of each basket.

Primrose led the way up the brookside, farther up than Betty had ever been before. The brook grew very narrow and much quieter and slower. It became so peaceful and rill-like that, even in the steep places where the cascades were, it seemed to glide down instead of dashing and flashing. Every little while it made a calm, deep pool. And the pools were green with great, luscious emerald cresses.

The little girls took off their shoes and stockings and pinned back their frocks and waded in and cut off the cresses with their sharp little knives. Amico stayed on the shore and guarded the baskets, which were soon filled high. Then they gathered sweet fern and covered the cresses with them to guard them from the sun.

"Now, when Joe comes for these and takes them down to the Inn to-night, I am sure they will give satisfaction," said Primrose. "I always try to get the very best I can, because they pay so generously for them," added the honest little merchant.

Betty said, "I certainly shall feel queer when they come on the table and everybody praises them—they always do praise them, Primrose to think that I gathered some of them and that not a soul there knows it."

That set Betty thinking again of the strange secrecy and of her problem. All the time, while they were putting on their stockings and shoes and while they were going carefully back toward Primrose's with their baskets of cress, Betty's mind kept asking over and over the same ques-

tion, "How can I ask Mr. Garland? O dear! I wonder if I can be brave enough!"

Primrose noticed that Betty's thoughts were wandering and asked her, "Why do you seem so distraught, Betty?"

Betty answered, "Primrose, if that big word you just used means 'distracted,' it's just what I am. I am thinking about you, dear, and wishing that, before I leave you this fall—"

Primrose held out her hands as if to ward off a blow and cried out, "Oh! Don't! Pray don't, Betty! Please, please do not speak about the time when you must leave me." Her eyes were brimming with tears and she went on to say, very humbly, "Forgive my crying. I know I am a bad, ungrateful girl and I will be all right in a minute. But I just can't bear to think of the end of the season and of—of your leaving me. I just cannot bear it. Every night I ask for strength not to think of it in bed and cry. For it's wrong and it would make dear Father suffer deeply, if he knew. But you are so very dear to me, Betty, and I shall be so lonely without you!"

Betty thought it best to change the subject, so she did as quickly as she could; and very soon the little girls were laughing again.

But deep in her heart she knew now that Joe

Silver was right! She knew for a certainty that, unless she could get the Garlands to leave the mountain, Primrose would be sadder and not

happier for having known her.

"It's the only way that I can do anything real for her," she thought as she went homeward. "The only way is to help her down into living like other people. But first I must know why they have to stay up there. It's lovely in summer. But when the snow is so high that they have to dig their way out of the cottage and nobody comes up all winter long, except Joe—it must be mighty lonely for a little girl!"

Betty thought of her own happy, busy winters, of school and Sunday-school and dancing-school and sewing lessons and music and skating in the Park and coasting with her friends who lived in the suburbs and the gay little visits on Saturdays and the Hippodrome and an occasional matinée, and candy pulls and parties and all the fun and excitement of Christmas and New Year's. Then came the image of Primrose, snowbound in her little mountain cottage, with the blizzard whirling around, and thinking longingly of Betty!

Betty stood still in her well-loved clearing by the little ruined hut and looked off toward the setting sun. Something firm and strong and brave seemed to grow in her heart.

"I'm going to try!" said Betty.

She felt better then and ran home quickly.

Her father was on the porch writing.

"Father," she cried, "I have made up my mind! I am going to try to ask Mr. Garland."

"Ah! Brave little Betty!" he said tenderly.

"So you are grimly determined?"

"Well—not quite that, Daddy. I've made up my mind I would try to speak to Mr. Garland and ask for his confidence. I did not promise myself I would do it, because I'm not a bit sure that I can, and I always feel so babyish when I make myself promises and do not keep them. But I promised myself I would try hard.—Are you writing to Brother Bob, Father?"

"Yes, dear."

Mr. Anderson had already been telling Robert about Betty's deeply felt problem concerning her friends on the mountain. So he merely added the line, "Betty has just come in, aglow with devotion and decision. She says she has made up her mind to try."

### CHAPTER XV

#### BETTY BALAUSTION

WHEN Robert got his father's letter, you may be sure he was proud of his small sister. He wrote to her immediately, for he knew that she was always encouraged and helped in her problems by her big brother's sympathy and guidance. And the present perplexity was not one of the usual little problems, but a very great one for a small girl to handle.

Robert had interesting news of his own as well, so he hastened to write to Betty:

# CAPE WILDWIND, Sept. 2nd.

MY GIRL,

Bless your kind heart! I think Father is right and Joe Silver is right and you are right, and, as they say in *The Mikado*, "all is right as right can be."

Do the brave thing, my dear. That's always likely to be the winner. Do you remember, last winter, when I was designing a house for that

wonderfully rich and powerful gentleman, and Father said he recalled him as a boy—a very poor and commonplace boy, whom nobobdy expected much of? Father said that he had made his fortune honestly and kindly and deserved the success he had won, but his old friends could not conceal their astonishment. Well, when I was in his office talking about the plans for the house I saw something that explained a lot to me. In a little frame, far back on his desk, were two quotations in his own handwriting. One read:

GREAT MEN HAVE PURPOSES; OTHERS HAVE WISHES.

And the other said:

Do the Thing You Are Afraid to Do.

I know now why he succeeded so well.

The hard problems in life need only character; and I am sure that my Betty has heaps of that.

But I am sure, my dear, that you need not be afraid; for, whether Mr. Garland tells you his secret or not, he must certainly appreciate and understand your loving interest. You will find it all easier than you think; I am sure of that.

Speaking of character, you ought to see Mother Candor going on with her sweet and happy living and not letting her eagerness and anxiety about the search for her granddaughter interfere with her cheerful service to every one around her.

Big Tim went away yesterday on his voyage of discovery; I hope and pray it will be a voyage of discovery.

We planned—Ron and I—a pretty surprise. You'll have to tell your friend Amico about it; I'll show you why in a minute.

I shall have to let you into the secret far enough to tell you that there has been a dog and pony show exhibiting down in the town and that the Candors had not heard of it, being so intent upon their own affairs just now.

Just as Mother and Captain Candor stood at the door with Big Tim, waiting for the buggy in which they were going to escort him to the train, a little black poodle, all frilled and "cocky," suddenly darted out from behind the tall windbreak hedge.

As soon as he caught their attention he stood on his hind legs and made a bow like a little man and began to waltz.

The Candors suspected me at once, they said afterward, but they were most delighted and laughed with joy over the doggie, as did Tim also. To see the big fellow's childlike pleasure at the little dog's antics no one would have thought that

he had traveled all over the world and seen the wonders of the ages.

While the black poodle was dancing gaily to the tune of his master's whistle—the master was concealed with me and Ronald and some others behind the trees—a white poodle joined him. The black poodle bowed and the white poodle, who wore a tiny skirt, dropped a curtsy, and they proceeded to do a pretty little minuet together.

And as if that were not enough, two mottled ponies, very shaggy Shetlands, took their stand behind them and marked time with their hoofs. Then the little dogs jumped up to the backs of the ponies and the ponies turned their sides toward the cottage and showed the banners that hung from the saddles. The first pony's banner said, GOOD FORTUNE. The second, A HAPPY RETURN.

The ponies scampered off, with the poodles bowing on their backs.

When the laughing Candors and Tim ran behind the hedge to investigate, they saw only a happy group of people trying to pretend they knew nothing about the performers and their master, who, by that time, had all vanished beyond the turn in the road.

And that is how we wished success to Tim. Now, here it is September. A number of city folks are about to return to town. But we know that the sea and the hills are rather better all by themselves, don't we? Especially when the leaves begin to turn, as they soon will with you in the mountains, and the soft autumnal clouds swirl low over my sunset seas!

Success to all our friends!
Your proud brother, my Betty Balaustion,
ROBERT.

Robert's letter did give Betty just the encouragement she needed. She had been putting off the talk with Mr. Garland from day to day and saying, "To-morrow, to-morrow," in the way that is so dangerous to our good resolutions.

"Betty Balaustion," she said to herself with pleasure. "I must deserve that. I truly must. I will go to-day. I will go right now. And I will do it."

So Betty started briskly across the meadow and over the bridge, on fire with determination.

But by the time she reached the Job Road her steps began to flag.

"O dear! It can't be that I don't want to go to Primrose's!" she cried in dismay.

The higher she went on the mountain road the lower her spirits sank. All of a sudden she felt that she could never, never do it. That made her feel dreadfully, because she knew that Joe Silver was very wise, and that he knew all about the Garlands and was their friend, and that he would not have said that she could get Primrose down off the mountain, unless he was certain that there was a way for her to do it.

She did so want to be brave and she went on, hoping that sense and strength would be given to her.

She climbed up the mountain by inches. Nobody would have believed that this slow-moving little girl was light-footed, fleet Betty Anderson.

She realized that it was the most important thing she had ever had to do in her life and she felt that she was about one year old and Mr. Garland about a thousand.

She was afraid he would think she was "fresh." She was afraid he would think she was impertinent. She was afraid he would think she was unduly curious and that she had not played fair in asking for more confidence than he had seen fit to give her. She was afraid he would be angry. But most of all she was afraid that she might hurt him and make him cry as he had done that day when he had overheard Primrose longing to have Betty go to her house and "be friends." She was afraid Primrose would think she shouldn't have spoken. She was afraid Mr. Gar-

land wouldn't let Primrose play with her any more. Everything she thought of seemed to give her something else to be afraid of.

At last she sat down on a stone and said to herself, "Now, see here, Miss! This won't do. Is it right to speak to Mr. Garland or isn't it?"

She answered herself that it was right. "It must be right," she thought, "because Father thought so too."

"Well, then," she went on scolding herself. "Elizabeth Anderson—Betty Balaustion!—go ahead and do it! Don't keep thinking about it until you get too scared to live."

That helped a little bit and Betty started on her way more bravely. She was still going very slowly, however,—until she heard a terrible noise down the ravine.

It was a frightful commingling of sounds—dogs baying and the splash of feet in the brook and rocks tumbling down and bushes being torn!

Betty clung to a tree, startled, frightened and very angry, too. For she knew what the uproar meant—the saddest sound that can be heard in the woods, the sound of the hunt.

Some law-breakers were hunting deer—law-breakers, for the season for hunting was not yet "open"; it was against the law to hunt deer

that early in the year. And it was against the law to hunt them with dogs at any time.

Betty hated the very thought of the hunt. She was afraid of the excited hunting dogs and of the hunters, too, and her first impulse was to hide until the chase went by. But then she thought that maybe she could get Mr. Garland or Joe Silver, if he happened to be there, in time to stop the hunt before the deer was killed. So she forgot her own fear in her anxiety for the poor hunted deer and rushed, scrambling, up the mountain.

And, oh! then she saw the most awful sight. There was a little turn in the Garlands' trail, where you could look right down the glen into the brook. From there Betty saw a beautiful deer, wounded and bloody, with his great eyes dropping tears, real tears, dashing wildly away from the hunters. He passed and soon Betty heard again the baying of the dogs.

She felt as if they were hunting her. Anybody would have felt so who could have seen that beautiful creature so horribly frightened and so hurt. Betty fairly tore to the Garlands' cot-

tage.

Nobody was there but Primrose. Even Amico was away with Mr. Garland, who had gone to Woodland Pond to fish. Primrose had begged him to take Amico because Mr. Garland's foot was not strong and she knew that Amico would come for her if she were needed. Mr. Garland had consented, because he knew that Betty was expected and would stay with Primrose.

Primrose's quick ears had already heard the awful noises down the glen and she was furiously angry. She was as white as snow and she cried out, "Oh, how can they, Betty? How can they?"

There are many little turns in the brook and as the chase followed the stream the noises seemed to come near and far and near again, minute by minute. At last they came very close: they seemed to be right behind the little girls.

Then Primrose put back her head so far that her golden braids nearly touched the bluebells and her white throat quivered like the throat of a singing bird. Then she opened her mouth and made an oval of her lips and a queer, strange sound came through them. It was like a whinny and like a gentle bellow and like a call. It was a weird, woodsy sound. Primrose kept it up for a little while and then—The wounded deer came up from the brook and straight to her!

She caught him by the horns and cried out, "Open the door, Betty! Quick! Quick!"

Betty did so and Primrose entered, dragging

the spent and panting animal behind her. Betty followed them and locked the door.

She was rather frightened, at first, to be locked in with the deer, but she need not have been. For the poor creature fell on his knees, gasping and weak. Primrose bathed his head just as if he had been a person and gave him some water to drink and washed his wound. It was horrid to look at but it was not very deep. The deer keeled over on his side and shut his eyes.

"Is he dying?" whispered Betty.

"No; I think not. He seems to be resting. I don't think he is enough wounded to die, unless he can die of fright," Primrose answered.

All this time the hunting dogs were baying and barking and acting angrily outside the cabin windows. But Primrose said, "Don't be frightened of the dogs, Betty. They cannot possibly get in. But the men will be here in a minute. I am more afraid of them. I wish Joe or Father would come."

"I am not afraid of the men," said Betty, "at least, not very much. For I do not see how big men could be willing to hurt two little girls for loving a poor, wounded animal."

Betty was right. For soon the two men came and looked in the little window. Betty was glad the window was closed, even if she had said she was not afraid of them, for they had rough faces and looked angry at first. But as they stared in at the girls and the deer, one of them laughed and the other's face crinkled up like he was going to cry and his eyes did get watery. They could not help admiring the little girls' bravery and being touched by it. They made friendly, reassuring little nods through the window and waved their hands and called off their dogs and went down the mountain.

The dogs kept trying to come back. Betty and Primrose could hear the men shouting sharply to them. And at last they were gone.

Soon Joe Silver came. He had met Mr. Garland going to fish that morning and had promised that he would drop in and see how Primrose was. He took in the situation at a glance, but said nothing while Primrose and Betty told him all about it.

He carried the deer outdoors and told the girls to keep away while he took the bullet out. It was only flesh deep, he said. After a long while he came back and said that he wanted some salt. So he took that and some tender grasses and brought them to the deer.

The little girls were too excited to speak, most of the time that Joe Silver was gone. They sat quietly in the window-seat in Primrose's room,

holding hands and saying scarcely anything. Once Primrose went for her little broom to clean the living-room floor. But she could not do it, and came back and sat by Betty again.

After what seemed an age to Betty and Prim-

rose, Joe Silver returned.

"Your friend is better," he said. "He's had his lunch and gone."

Then Joe Silver shook his head and laughed to himself. He kept shaking his head harder and harder and laughing in silence.

"We call that 'laughing in his beard,' " Primrose whispered.

Joe cleaned up the floor for her and straightened the little room, all the time continuing to chuckle. At last they heard him murmur, "Joe Silver doctoring venison! What will the world see next!"

Then he bade the little girls to go out into the sunshine and sat down in the cabin door to wait for Mr. Garland.

Primrose and Betty soon recovered their gaiety and laughed and played in the garden. But Joe became graver and graver, as if there were something on his mind.

Only once he smiled and spoke. He said to Primrose, "One day I said that girls were not as brave as boys; didn't I? Well, I was wrong. They are."

Then he seemed to pay no further attention to them. But Primrose and Betty were very proud of the compliment, for they knew it was high praise coming from Joe Silver.

"Here comes Father," cried Primrose, as they heard Amico's welcoming bark and the rustle of leaves and the crackle of dry twigs. And she ran to him and told him of their adventure.

Mr. Garland had a long string of fish in his hand, which he handed to Joe Silver in silence. He grew very pale and you could see that he was much disturbed by what had happened. He could not speak for some time. Then he said that it was a blessed thing that the huntsmen were a decent sort and that they went away without making trouble.

"I'll never leave Primrose here alone again, never, never!" he said.

"Why, Father dear!" Primrose expostulated. "Don't be afraid. I am as safe here as can be. After all, the men did not hurt me, you see. They were nothing but hunters; they wouldn't hurt anything but the deer. They would not even have come near me if I hadn't called the deer. Besides, there is even less danger of their coming here now than there was before. Now

that they know we've seen them breaking the game laws, they will be only too glad to keep away from us. So do not be alarmed, dearest."

But her father shook his head.

"What a good debater you are, little woman," he said. "But, no, I could not be comfortable, now, thinking of you here alone."

Then he turned to Joe and asked, "Don't you think it is unwise for her to be left up here alone, Joe?"

Joe Silver looked into Mr. Garland's eyes for a long time and then said slowly and very clearly, "I think it is very wrong for her to be up here at all."

Mr. Garland turned then and fairly ran into the cabin, with his head bowed, and locked the door.

Primrose went over to Joe and said sadly and reproachfully, "Oh! Oh! You have done it again!"

Joe looked just as sad as she did, but he replied doggedly, "Sorry. But I had to."

Then he went away, sighing and shaking his head. At the top of the trail he turned and looked at Betty. "It's up to you," he said.

Betty's cheeks burned and her heart beat fast. She felt that Joe had opened the way for what she had to do. She felt that the dreaded, important moment had come.

So she went to the cabin and knocked at the door. Her heart was knocking harder than her hand, but Betty Balaustion did not falter.

"Why, Betty—" Primrose began in surprise; but Betty silenced her, saying, "I must go in, Primrose. Please don't say anything and please don't come with me."

Mr. Garland opened the door in answer to Betty's knock. He looked white and worried. He was much astonished to see Betty standing there, especially when she motioned to Primrose to stay outside.

"What is it, Betty?" he asked. "Is anything wrong?"

Betty began to talk as soon as she got in and she spoke very fast. She was afraid that she could not begin at all if she stopped to think and that, if she spoke slowly, her courage might not last until she got through.

But her love for Primrose taught her what to say and the simple little speech went to Mr. Garland's heart more directly than any wellplanned argument could have done.

Betty said, "Mr. Garland, I love you. I love you and Primrose very, very much. I hate to have you unhappy. And I don't want Primrose to live up here all the time and not be like other little girls forever and ever. I'm only a little girl, but I think maybe I could help get you and Primrose down and fix up whatever the trouble is if I knew what it is—because I love you very much. I asked Father and he thought maybe I could help—but he didn't know if I could. But he wouldn't tell me why you have to stay up here. He said only you could tell me—if you wanted to—because it was your secret. But he said I could tell you that I was a trustworthy little girl and that he would advise you to tell me and that we all wanted to help, if you would let us. So please trust me, Mr. Garland. For I love you and Primrose very much."

Mr. Garland's eyes filled with tears as Betty spoke. But she could see that, though he was deeply moved, he was neither hurt nor angry. He understood her feeling and appreciated her courage and affection. He stooped down and kissed her and took her on his knee on the big rustic chair, and stroked her curls, just as her own Daddy did and said, "Good, brave little friend to my girl! I'm glad you love us so much, little Betty. You are right. Primrose must get down from the mountain—whatever happens to me. And I shall be glad to have your help—and your good father's, too, if he will give it.

You are our little friend now and are entitled to know all about us. I will willingly trust the girl who has trusted me so perfectly. But I think you and Primrose and I have all had excitement and strain enough for one day, and that your mother would be more pleased if I let you go home and rest now, as Primrose, too, must do. But when you come again, I'll tell you all about it."

"I think you are just darling, not to think me meddlesome and horrid," said Betty.

"I think you are 'just darling' yourself, Betty Bob-curl!" said he.

"It was you who made me brave enough, in the first place," Betty said. "You-and Balaustion!"

Mr. Garland kissed her again and Betty went out and kissed Primrose, whose eyes were wide with wonder, and patted Amico and went away with a great load off her heart.

Mrs. Anderson knew as soon as she saw Betty come into her room that the great deed had been done.

"Mother!" Betty cried. "I asked Mr. Garland! And it wasn't hard at all!"

She poured out to her mother's sympathetic ears all the thrilling events of the day.

"It is the most exciting day I ever had," she

said. "And I'm tired, Mother dear,—but, oh, so happy! For Mr. Garland is going to tell me all about it. And I know Daddy and you and I will find a way, and that it will all end happily!"

### CHAPTER XVI

### MR. GARLAND'S SECRET

"MOTHER! Father, Mother!" cried Betty in great glee, running down the road to meet her parents. "Only think! The Candors have invited me to come to stay with them in time for the house-warming when the new bungalow is finished. Won't that be glorious? Can I go? I mean, may I? Oh, hurry into the tree-house and read this! Read it."

"Another letter from Robert?" asked Mrs. Anderson, smiling. "Robert and Betty are such great correspondents this summer," she remarked to her husband, "one would think they were writing a book."

"So we are," Betty replied. "We are writing

two books."

"That is true," her father agreed. "Two books in print of life—that means with real living people for the characters, Betty."

"One thing is certain," said Betty's mother. "It is doing Betty a great deal of good. It is

not only good for her to live in the lives of others, but the actual writing has been beneficial, too. Now we are here in the tree-house, daughter. Let's have the important letter."

"It is full of compliments," said Betty, blush-

ing; "but I must say I like them."

Her parents laughed and Mr. Anderson said, "'An honest confession is good for the soul," and pinched her cheek. Then he opened Bob's letter and read:

## CAPE WILDWIND, Sept. 5th.

BRAVE BETTY,

I am very proud of you. I feel like walking abroad with a placard on my chest reading "Behold Betty's Big Brother!"

Courage is a good thing and friendship is a better and my girl had them both. We think you and Primrose are trumps to have saved the deer and we think you are a special trump to have dared ask Mr. Garland his secret.

We have had some argument about physical and moral courage, as to which it is better to carry around with one—the kind of courage that made two little girls dare to face the hunters or the kind that made Betty go up the mountain and do an unpleasant task because she thought it would help her friend.

Mother Candor said that she had seen men who would fight anything in sight, or anybody, and yet did not have courage enough to confess themselves wrong when they were mistaken, and she had seen little women, afraid of a beetle, who would face any sort of sorrow for what they thought honorable. She gave her vote for moral courage. So did we all, but the Captain added thoughtfully, "We-ll, of course, you are right; moral courage is better, if you can only have one kind. But, as an actual fact, I think you will usually find that anyone who has a great deal of one kind has usually a great deal of both. Courage is courage and a truly brave man or woman is brave in body, mind and spirit. A real brave person is not afraid of a beetle or of standing up for what's right either." The Captain is a real brave person himself, so he should know.

We are very busy ordering draperies and furnishings for the new house. It will be charming and we have a hope. O Betty! Shall I tell you now or keep it? No! It's too good to keep another minute. The Candors and I have a hope that Father and Mother will let you come for the housewarming when the dear little place is ready, as it soon should be. I shall beg, beseech, cajole, threaten, and insist until they let you come. So give them good warning of what they have to

expect. The Candors will write you a little invitation when the time comes; they want you to stay with them.

Tell Father we loved the kodak pictures he sent us—especially the one of a smiling, wind-blown little girl playing the fiddle on a mountain top. I could imagine the trees full of birds with their heads cocked listening to the concert and saying, "Very lovely, indeed, for mere human music!" and bunnies and chipmunks in the hollows replying scornfully, "Very pretty, compared with any music, we think. These musicians are so liable to jealousy, my dear!"

We liked the picture of Miss Connie picking poppies in the garden, too. We liked it so much that Mother Candor begged it from me. She said that she and Miss Connie were just naturally made to be friends and to love each other. Of course, I gave it to her, but it left me brokenhearted, for I wanted the picture myself. I think it is the loveliest I ever saw. Ask Dad to print me another, will you?

Tim Andrews is on the high seas now and we hope it will not be long before we get news from England. I hope he may find the kind neighbor in the English town who forwarded the blue Bible and that she may remember the address to which she sent it. It will be easy to recognize the blue

Bible itself, if we ever get on its track, for Mother Candor remembers the inscription she put in it. So make it a habit, Betty dear, if ever you see a small blue Bible, to ask permission to look inside of it and see if the fly-leaf reads: "To John, who cannot sail so far as to pass the boundaries of Mother's love."

Just as you cannot escape your big brother's, little sister of my heart!

B. B. B.

"Well, may I go, if it is possible?" asked Betty as soon as the letter had been read. "Oh! If Primrose can come down off the mountain and I can go to the Candors' housewarming and Tim gets good news—wouldn't that be too glorious? May I go, Mother?"

"Surely you may go, honey, if it can be arranged to get you there, as I have no doubt it can. We must let the details wait, however, until Father comes back from his visit to the city." Mr. Anderson was returning to the city on the noonday train to remain for a week.

"Oh, thank you!" said happy Betty, kissing her mother. "I knew you would. It is a nuisance that Father has to go and attend to business in the city on his vacation! And I'm sorry that you won't be here to hear what Mr. Garland tells

me—but, then, you know about it, don't you, Daddy? And if he lets you help you can do it when you come back."

"Are you going to hear Mr. Garland's confi-

dence to-day?" asked Mrs. Anderson.

"Yes, Mother; and I'm so excited. I waited a few days so as not to seem too in-a-hurry. I saw Primrose, though, at our sewing lesson. But I simply can't wait any longer. So I'm going right after luncheon. I sent word by Primrose that I was coming, so that if Mr. Garland did not feel like it to-day he could let me know through Joe Silver."

"That was delicate and right," said Mrs. An-

derson approvingly.

Betty found that afternoon that Mr. Garland did seem to "feel like it." He appreciated Betty's consideration and showed his own courtesy by meeting her on the trail, as if to let her know how glad he was to welcome her.

He rubbed Betty's hand gently as they went along together, for it was cold with excitement and eagerness. He led her into the little studio. Primrose was there. She had been posing for the lovely portrait that was so much like her. Mr. Garland kept on painting as he talked. He said it was easier for him that way.

"You know I am an artist, Betty," he began.

"And when I lived back there in the world some people were kind enough to think me a pretty

good one."

"Now, Father!" Primrose interrupted. "He is too modest, Betty. He was considered one of the very greatest artists. When you were telling me about your going with your brother to the big Art Museum in Central Park, it was all I could do not to tell you that some of my father's beautiful paintings were hanging there for everyone to admire."

Mr. Garland smiled at his daughter's pride.

He went on, "I had a great big, splendid studio to work in. It always seemed a pity to me to close it up in the summer when I was away, as so many poor artists had no good place to paint in at all. Therefore, when summer came and Primrose's mother and I and the baby—that was Primrose—used to go to Europe, I took to letting some poverty-stricken young fellows, who could not afford to rent a studio, use it and live in it until we returned in the fall.

"Then, when Primrose's mother died"—Mr. Garland could hardly bear to tell this part and spoke quickly, as if he wanted to be through with it as soon as he could—"I did not feel like coming back to America without her. So Primrose and I stayed in England a whole year, and the

poor young artists were allowed to live in the studio all that time."

"That certainly was dear of you," said Betty, as Mr. Garland paused to think how he could make the rest of his story clear to such a young listener.

"Well, I am glad I let them stay there," he said, "even though it brought me much sorrow in the end; for two of the young men have become very great and famous now, and I am thankful that I was able to give them help when they needed it.

"When at last I came home with this little girl—she was just a toddler then—I found that the four young men were engaged on some pretty big work and I still let them stay in my studio until they had finished it. For I was not yet fit for work and was very seldom at the studio myself.

"One of these young men was not honest. He was a fairly good artist, but a very bad man. You know, Betty, that old, old pictures made by the Masters, the world's very greatest artists who lived centuries ago, are rare and very, very precious. Rich men and museums and even cities and nations pay vast sums of money for them; and they are worth all the money in the world

for the reverence and delight and beauty-loving honor that surround them.

"Well, this dishonest young artist knew a dealer in pictures, a man who sold pictures for a living, who was as wicked as he. The dealer used to find pictures that were old but not made by the Masters and not particularly valuable; and this unscrupulous young artist had the cleverness to touch them up and make them look so much like Old Masters that many people, who were not able to judge for themselves and trusted the dealer, were deceived into paying high prices for them. The two men got rich on their dishonest gains.

"It was all found out at last, as such things always are, and the dealer was punished as he should have been. But he would not tell who the artist was who had helped in the cheating; which would have been praiseworthy in him, perhaps, if the pictures had not been traced back to my studio, where unjust suspicion fell upon all the young men, and even upon me.

"It should have been short-lived enough, for the guilty one fled from the country and all the rest of us remained to vindicate ourselves—to make it as clear as we could that we had had no hand in doing this cheating thing. Of course, none of our friends believed we had had anything to do with it. But some unjust newspapers tried to make it seem that we might have had a part in the wickedness and some people, too quick to think ill of others, believed them.

"The young men did not take it so terribly to heart. They were young, with life before them. They were unknown and would probably not be remembered in this connection. But I was unbearably disappointed and wounded that anybody would believe me so guilty against honesty and against art, and I felt that the public that had honored me in the past would never trust me again—and Primrose's mother had died—and I felt that there was nothing to live for any more but my little girl. So I brought her up into the mountains and determined not to be heard from again, unless the truth about my innocence should be firmly established and so well known that no one could question it.

"In many ways it has been pleasant here. And I have painted pictures in the mountains better than any I made before. That cabinet is full of them. But I always intended that they should not be shown while I lived. So I made the advertising pictures for a living and sold them through an agency with the help of my old guide and friend, Joe Silver. The rest of our story you know, Betty."

Betty went over to Mr. Garland and patted his hand in the comforting, affectionate little way she had.

"I feel now," he continued, "that it was weak to do as I did; that I should have stayed and faced it out, if only for Primrose's sake. But the baby seemed well and happy here; and the longer I stayed away the harder it was to go back, and the more I brooded about how ungratefully the world that had praised and loved my work forgot the worker and was content to believe ill of him, the more bitter I became.

"I was always thinking, 'Next year, next year I will return.' But this summer has opened my eyes wide, Betty dear. I know that the time has come now. I know that Primrose must leave the mountain at once and go to school and not grow up unlike the other little girls. And I'm conceited enough to think that she wouldn't go very happily unless I go too—eh, my girl?"

"I wouldn't go at all without you, of course,"

said Primrose firmly.

"My Primula!" said Mr. Garland tenderly,

calling her by her mother's name.

"So now my resolution is taken. We are to go back to the city soon. And, Betty-Best-friend, if you will ask your father to come up here and talk to me, perhaps he can advise me just what to do and maybe he will negotiate the sale of a picture or two so that Primrose may get ready and buy the frocks and other pretty things that little girls have. I shall ask him to try to keep my return as quiet as can be, so that the newspapers may not say unkind, untrue things again." Mr. Garland winced. "Do you think he can, little Betty?"

Betty's expression had grown very sad and sober during the painful narrative. She had not known that there was so much injustice and ingratitude in the world. But now she brightened, for she felt certain that the injustice could be defeated and everything made right, and she knew that her father would know just how to go about it.

"I know my father can," she answered eagerly. "And I feel sure he can make the papers tell the truth, Mr. Garland, and make it all come out right. Father can do anything. He's gone to the city for a week; but I'll bring him up here the very minute he comes back. He'll fix everything."

Mr. Garland smiled and shook his head a little dubiously; but Betty said, "Oh, yes, he can! You don't know my father."

"Well, at any rate, I think he would tell me to come back, whether everything is 'fixed' or not," said Mr. Garland; and Betty added thoughtfully, "I only know what he always says to me, Mr. Garland. He says that honesty should never hide nor truth keep silent."

Mr. Garland looked very grave then, and said, "I am sure that he is right. Anyway, we can try. And, whatever happens, you have won, Betty. Primrose may leave the mountain whenever she wishes. Do you want to visit Betty at the Inn to-day, daughter?"

"Wait until some more of the boarders have gone home. I'd rather not answer so many questions. Let me get used to the thought of going down."

Betty was a little bit disappointed at first; she would have loved to take Primrose home with her right away. But she understood that it was natural for Primrose to be shy about it, and she was happy to know that they would soon be together as often as possible.

"Oh! You'll love it, Primrose," she cried. "Only think! We can be together all the winter.

Oh! Goody, goody!"

Primrose's eyes glowed, but she said, "Father, dear, if it will be too hard for you to meet every-body—and the newspapers—I'm really happy to stay here."

"No, Primrose," Betty expostulated. "My father's going to get all that fixed. You wait and

see. And maybe Bob can help. May I tell my brother Robert, Mr. Garland?"

"To be sure, you may."

"Thank you. My brother Robert is just as interested as can be in Primrose. I'll write to him to-night and tell him. I just know that he and Daddy can fix it. Wouldn't it be just great if Primrose can come down to the hotel for my birthday on the nineteenth! Most of the summer boarders will have gone then, Primrose. And—oh!—it would be the joyousest birthday present!"

"And you shall have it, Betty dear," Mr. Garland assured her. "Don't you think that Betty

deserves it of us, Primrose?"

"Yes, indeed," said happy Primrose. "And I

hope it won't be hard for you, Father."

"With one of you on each side of me and both of you so happy," said Mr. Garland, putting his arms around the little girls, "I feel as if nothing could be hard."

Betty went down the mountain, composing her letter to Robert. She could hardly wait until she reached the hotel to write to him all about Mr. Garland's sad story and the perfect success of her mission. She was happier than she had words to express, but she knew that Robert would understand and be delighted with the success of his "interfering little sister," as she called herself.

As she turned into the broad lower part of the Job Road she saw Joe Silver at a distance. She saw him a long time before he saw her and he was walking so slowly and stopping so often that she knew he was waiting for her.

Betty wondered what to say to him. She knew that Joe was eager to know what had happened. She did not want to discuss Mr. Garland's affairs with Joe without that gentleman's permission. And yet she did want Joe Silver to know that she had not failed him.

When Joe met her he did not ask anything with his lips, but Betty thought his eyes were just like big question-marks.

"He knows I've asked Mr. Garland," thought Betty. "Joe Silver knows everything. I think the wood fairies must tell him."

Betty decided to do to Joe Silver just what he would have done to her under the same circumstances.

She smiled a long, slow smile, as much like him as she could, and then said very slowly, in Joe's quiet, drawling way, "When you trust anybody to do something, you must just wait and let her do it." Then she went on past him.

She couldn't help looking back after a while. And there was Joe Silver doubled right in two with laughing. He did not laugh long in silence this time, but burst into loud guffaws that made the woods resound. He laughed so loud and clear that Betty kept hearing him all the way down to the meadow, and just before each new roar of laughter she heard the little echo of the last one.

Every time Betty heard Joe's laugh her own floated up to meet it.

And the old Job Road, that afternoon, was transformed into a path of merriment and joy.

### CHAPTER XVII

#### PRIMROSE AND HER COUSIN

N OW imagine if you can Betty's state of mind when she received this letter:

# CAPE WILDWIND, September 7th.

#### O BETTY! MY DEAR!

Your letter just came to me—it's late at night and I've just come home from having supper with the Candors. I must answer it at once to tell you something so very, very important about Mr. Garland. I cannot wait till morning. This may catch the last mail train.

In the first place, I must make a confession. As soon as you told me in a letter long ago about the beautiful picture of Primrose that Mr. Garland had painted, I suspected that he was Frederick Mason Garland, the great painter who had such a distressing experience years ago. But, of course, it was only a suspicion, and, of course, I felt, as Father did, that I was not free to tell you of it.

But now I have read your letter twice and it

seems clear that Mr. Garland himself does not know the whole story.

Betty, hear this: The young artist who prepared the false pictures confessed three years ago! The newspapers all told then how wrongly Mr. Garland had been suspected, how terribly misjudged.

It seems hardly possible that Mr. Garland has not heard of it himself. And yet I remember that the reporters failed to find him or to get any inkling of his whereabouts at the time of the disclosure. And he has cut himself off so completely from his friends, from the newspapers, and from all communication with people who care about the art world. Even the advertising pictures he makes are probably sent by some agent who does not know his true identity. So it may be possible that he has never heard; and, indeed, from your letter, it must be the fact.

My advice to you, dear,—if Father has not returned to the mountains by the time this letter reaches you—is to have Miss Connie meet Primrose at once.

Miss Connie, as she is Mrs. Garland's cousin, will surely know all about it. She can give Mr. Garland the full details. And, as all has been revealed and explained to the world, there is no longer any secret for you to keep.

I must rush this to the mail, sweetheart. Mr. Garland has suffered so many unnecessary years I cannot let him suffer an unnecessary minute.

Bless my lass and the magic of her friendship! Run, run, bring the good news to your friends! YOUR HAPPY BROTHER BOB.

Betty ran into her mother's room calling out, "Mother, Mother! It's all right! It's all right!"

But Mrs. Anderson was not there and Betty ran madly out again and knocked upon Miss Connie's door. There was no one there either. Betty was not surprised at finding Miss Connie out, for Miss Connie was a very outdoors person and almost never in the house in the day time. So the excited little girl dashed out to find her. She tore along the roads and up the trails and in the ravines, stopping everybody she met and asking eagerly, "Have you seen Miss Connie Althorpe?"

She learned that some of the people had gone to Split Rock Falls, and she ran all the way there in the hope that Miss Connie was with them. She found them all sitting on the big rocks by the shore and watching the cascade. But Miss Connie was not among them. She had been there, they told Betty, but had returned to the hotel by another path.

Betty flew back after her.

No, she was not there. She had returned, indeed, the ladies on the porch told Betty, but had taken her paints and gone up to the Cedar Falls to sketch. Fortunately Cedar Falls were not far from the house, for Betty was hot and tired and out of breath by this time. She was glad to have a clew at last. She hurried up the slippery trail where it was all pine-needles, because that was the shortest way. Part of the way she had to climb on her hands and knees, like a baby. Then she picked her steps over the moist, slidy soapstone rocks in Cedar Brook.

And at last she found Miss Connie.

Miss Connie was busy sketching. She was sitting on a fallen log, with her hat beside her. She had her little sketch pad on her knee and her head on one side and her pencil held high in the air.

By this time Betty was too eager to think about her usual good manners. She did not mean to be rude, but she simply could not wait for explanations.

Before Miss Connie knew what had happened to her, Betty had picked up her hat from the log and put it on her head, had closed her sketch pad, taken away her pencil, and saying, "Come, please come! Please come right away. I want to take you somewhere. It is important," had begun to drag her across the rocks.

Some young ladies would have resented all this. But Miss Connie had kept her heart very young indeed, and so she understood Betty just as if they had been of the same age. She saw that Betty was too excited to explain, and as soon as she made sure that nothing was the matter, she came right along. Her eyes twinkled all the time and it was plain that she thought it was just some little-girlish interest of Betty's that had taken her so suddenly from her sketching. Whatever it was, Miss Connie was glad to be included in it. She suspected that some little surprise had been planned for her, so she dutifully talked about other things all the way. She was a little astonished at being taken up the hard, rocky Job Road, but she did not decline to go, nor did she ask any questions.

When they reached the open space at the foot of Primrose's trail, Betty thought that perhaps she should not bring Miss Connie farther without Mr. Garland's permission, so she asked her to wait for her just a few minutes.

But Betty had just started up the trail when she turned back and came down again—for Amico barked and Primrose stepped out of the bushes. Except that she was startled this time, Primrose looked just as she had the first time Betty saw her, as she stood timidly holding the bushes, with Amico beside her and the sunlight making her long braids shine and the top of her head glow like a buttercup. She was beautiful.

Miss Connie clasped her hands, when she saw Primrose, and turned so white that Betty was afraid she was ill. She said, "Primula! You must be Primula Garland's child!" For Primrose looked so much like her mother that Miss Connie knew her immediately.

Primrose was frightened. She cried out, "Bet-

ty, who is it? What is the matter, Betty?"

But Miss Connie, with her sweet and blessed tact, made her comfortable in a minute. She stopped seeming excited and spoke calmly, just as if nothing wonderful was happening. "Do not be frightened, dear child," she said. "I will go away right now, if you wish it. Only first I should like to know whether your name is Primrose Garland. For, if it is, I am your cousin Constance, my dear, who loved your mother and your father—and trusted him always—and I have tried so long to find you both."

Primrose said softly, almost in a whisper, "Yes. I am Primrose Garland. And do not go

away, please."

She looked at Miss Connie strangely, as if she longed to go to her and did not know whether she ought to or not.

But Miss Connie, her eyes full of tears, held out her arms to Primrose and said, "My precious little girl! My dear!" and Primrose gave a little sob and ran to her and laughed and cried in Miss Connie's arms.

Betty thought it best to leave them alone together. So she quietly slipped away.

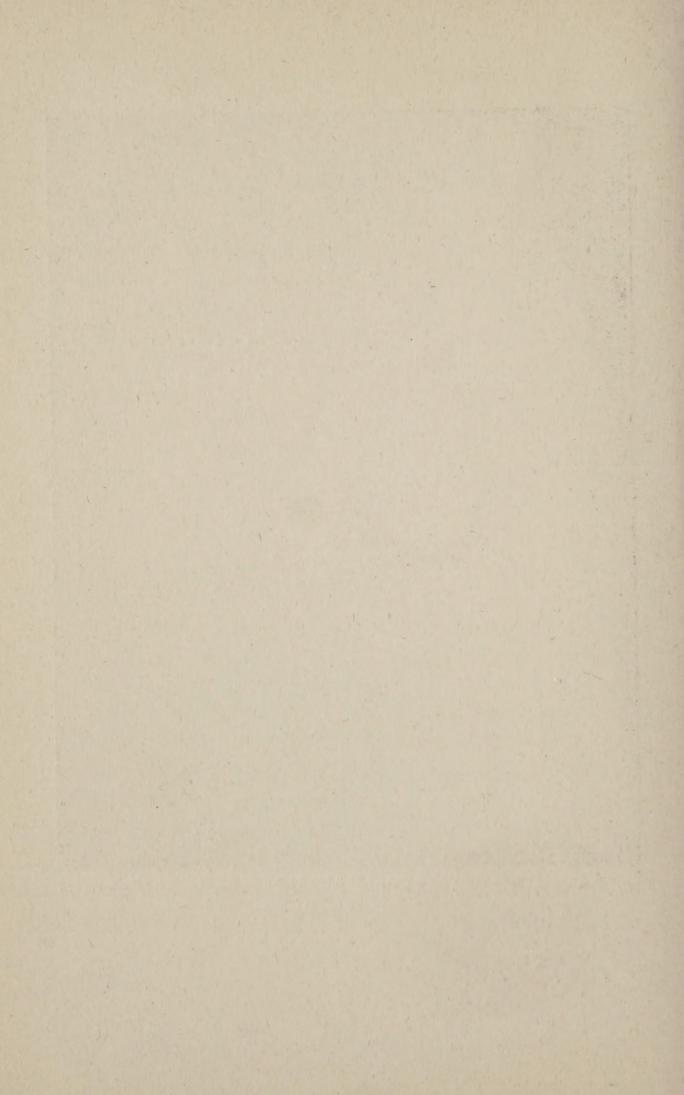
The next few hours were very anxious ones for Betty. She stayed close around the hotel and kept her glance turning to the end of the Job Road to watch for Miss Connie's return. She was so eager to know as soon as possible whether all went happily up the mountain. She felt sure that everything was right and beautiful. But she wanted to have Miss Connie come and say that it was really so.

At last she went up to her room and took Mr. Shiver Strings from his case and began to practice gently. Mr. Shiver Strings always knew how to calm Betty and keep her content. She became so interested in her music that when Miss Connie did turn down the Job Road and cross the meadow Betty did not see her, after all.

But Miss Connie came right up to Betty's room and brought her a note from Mr. Garland. It



"MISS CONNIE CLASPED HER HANDS, AND TURNED SO WHITE THAT BETTY WAS AFRAID SHE WAS ILL."—Page 239



said, "Thank you, little Fairy Godmother. We

are very happy."

Betty's mother came in then and heard the delightful news. And Betty told them both about Robert's letter and how she had known by that that it was right to take Miss Connie up the mountain.

Miss Connie left them then to tell Mrs. Al-

thorpe what had happened.

All that evening Miss Connie and Mrs. Althorpe were so pleased with Betty, and Miss Connie praised and petted her so much, and even Mrs. Althorpe said such lovely things about her, that Mrs. Anderson said she was afraid they would spoil her.

They praised Robert too, and Miss Connie said

that he deserved to be Betty's big brother.

When they were alone in their own rooms that night, Betty snuggled up on the couch, close to

her mother and gave a happy sigh.

"Oh! I am so thankful!" she said. "It seems too good to be true that Miss Connie is Primrose's cousin. H'm! Mrs. Althorpe is Primrose's grand-aunt, too. It seems so queer. Especially about Mrs. Althorpe. I can't think of her as being related to Primrose. Of course, she's nice, Mother,—but so very fine and stylish and sort of frosty that you can't enjoy her very much. But

Miss Connie is a darling and I am so happy that she really belongs to Primrose. She says that Primrose is to be her little sister. I am so glad! I'd like to be her little sister too.

"I wonder what the Garlands will do now?" she prattled on. "Well, anyway, one thing is sure: they won't always stay on the mountain. Why, now Father won't have to speak to the newspapers or anything: they won't need it, will they? Isn't it wonderful! O Mother, I think I must be the happiest and thankfullest little girl in the whole world except Primrose Garland. And I want her to be the happiest of all."

And Betty was radiant with that sweetest of pleasures—joy in the happiness of our friends.

### CHAPTER XVIII

#### PLEASANT PLANS

THE first thing that Mr. Anderson did upon his return to Apple Tree Inn, where he heard the good news about the Garlands, was to go up the mountain with Betty to call upon them.

He was overjoyed at the "happy ending" and most astonished to learn that Mr. Garland had not known long before of his complete vindication. He said that he had wondered why Mr. Garland remained so sensitive and preferred to keep away from other people, when his innocence had been made so clear; but it had never occurred to him that Mr. Garland might not have received the news of the young artist's confession.

You may be sure that he was proud and thankful for his little daughter's part in bringing about the present satisfactory state of things.

He kept smiling down into her happy face as they went up the Job Road together, and he said, "I think it is just as glad an adventure as I have ever known or read about,—this kind adventure of yours. I hope Joe Silver is as delighted as he ought to be, and I'm sure that The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill will consider you a

useful person, indeed."

"Well, I'm sure that they'll both be very, very glad for Primrose's sake," said Betty. "But I think that they will be sorry for themselves. Anybody'd be sorry to lose Primrose. But Mr. Garland and Primrose say that they will come back here every summer that they can; and I know that they will never forget Joe and the little Old Woman or any of their other friends. Primrose says she will love Joe forever for all that he has done for her, and forever and ever and ever for bringing her and me together."

Mr. Garland laughed.

"The best of all the joys of the summer," he said, "will prove to be the joy of a close, allyour-life-long friendship, I trust. There is noth-

ing better than that."

"I know it will," said Betty. "Primrose and I are always going to be best friends. Brother Bob said in his letter, 'May you always wear a Primrose Garland on your heart!' and I'm going to. Bob says the Candors are just as pleased as can be about Primrose. He says that Mother Candor danced when she heard the good news. Just like a little girl! She held out her white apron, by the lace ruffle, and danced a little waltz of joy. I certainly wish I could have seen her do it."

"Have the Candors heard from Timothy Andrews?" asked Mr. Anderson.

"Oh! Not yet. He hasn't had much time, though, Bob says. Oh, do you think they'll find John's baby, Daddy?"

"No one can tell that, dear. One cannot help fearing that the English neighbor of Mrs. John Candor has forgotten an address written in forwarding the blue Bible so many years ago—even if Tim should find the neighbor herself, which may also be doubtful." But, seeing Betty's downcast face, he added more cheerfully, "Let us hope, anyway, my dear. It is our duty to hope until it is clear that there is no chance at all—and even a little bit after that, for fear that we may be mistaken."

"I'm going to hope," said Betty brightly. "See how wonderfully everything is happening for the Garlands! I just know you will just love them, Daddy!"

"I am sure I shall."

"It seems so strange for Primrose to be having so much company," said Betty. "Miss Con-

nie comes up every day and even Mrs. Althorpe came once."

"It must have been a very hard climb for Mrs.

Althorpe."

"Yes, sir,—she said it was. That's why she came only once. She said it tired her dreadfully to go up the Job Road. But,—Daddy——"

"Yes, dear?"

"Of course it did tire her; and I know she isn't so very young. But—I think she wouldn't get quite so tired if she would not wear such high heels on her slippers. I have often noticed that very stylish people do not have much fun in the country."

"That is true, little great-grandmother. The country likes plain clothes and plain people the best," said her father, smiling. "But, for that matter, I do not believe that very stylish people have as much fun anywhere as plainer folks do."

Primrose ran down to meet Betty and her father, for Joe had brought word of their approach. Mr. Garland did not come with her because his foot was troublesome. Primrose said that she thought the best part of their going to the city would be that her father could consult a good doctor and have his foot made well.

Primrose and Betty and Amico and the pigeon played in the little garden, while their fathers sat in the wee living-room and discussed business matters.

Soon Miss Connie came up the trail and Primrose ran to greet her and kissed her just as if she had known her all her life. Mr. Garland saw them through the little window and called out, "All right, Connie. You may have your wish now." And he came out to see her, leaning on Mr. Anderson's arm.

"You see, Anderson," he explained, "this young lady has been very eager to go down to Albany and get some frocks and fixings for Primrose. But I wouldn't let her advance any money until I had seen you and found out from you whether people still liked my paintings and whether you thought I could surely sell them to advantage."

"My dear fellow," Mr. Anderson assured him, "you have no idea how valuable your works have become. People have had time to learn to appreciate them and there will be a grand rush of dealers to secure these, you may be sure. Old ones have been resold at fabulous prices."

"I told him so, but he was too modest to believe me," said Miss Connie reproachfully, pretending to pout.

They all sat down on the grass and the stones and the little rustic bench at the door.

"Now, Primrose," Miss Connie said gaily, "I'll

go down and buy a lot of pretty frocks in Albany, and then we'll have a good time dressing you up and taking you down to the hotel. We must hurry to be in time for Betty's birthday."

But Primrose began timidly, "Cousin Connie, would you mind just buying the goods instead of the dresses?"

"Why, dear?"

"You see," Primrose explained, "I'd love to have the pretty dresses you would pick out; but there is a little old woman here, who lives down under Split Rock Hill—Betty knows her. She is a dear friend of ours and has always made my dresses or taught me to make them. And I think her feelings would be hurt if I got others the minute I had a little more money. I'd rather, if you don't mind, buy the goods and let her make me some to wear down to the hotel. Or she might think I didn't consider hers good enough to wear before the city people. I would not wound her."

Miss Connie looked a little disappointed, but she said, "Yes, dear. I'm sure that you are right to be loyal to your friends. And I will buy some pretty fabrics and some patterns, and I have no doubt your little old lady can make the simple frocks you will need for the hotel well enough. But I'm going to make it up to myself, by buying all your school and dress-up things when we go back to the city."

"It seems wonderful and glorious to be making plans for Primrose just like other girls," said Betty delightedly. "She is coming down to the Inn for my birthday on the nineteenth; isn't she, Mr. Garland? And won't you please come too? I'd love to have you. And so would Primrose."

"So would everybody," said Miss Connie.

"So say we all of us," added Mr. Anderson. "I'd be an ungrateful sort of fellow, indeed, to refuse such an invitation," said Mr. Garland. "Besides, I want to come down to Betty's party very much. I have been a little shy about appearing at the Inn; and I am glad that Betty's birthday comes after most of the summer boarders have departed and only those simple-hearted lovers of the autumn who stay for the turning foliage are here."

"It is natural that you should prefer not to be made the center of excitement," said Mr. Anderson. "The people who are staying at the Inn into the autumn are all old friends of ours who have been here, at Apple Tree Inn, with us for many seasons. I am sure they will treat you with simple frankness and not embarrass you in the least."

"Well, I must not be oversensitive, especially

as I am going back to the city, where it is only to be expected that some well-meaning but tactless people will 'make a fuss,' " said Mr. Garland with a funny grimace.

"Are you going to our city—to New York to

live?" cried Betty.

"Yes. Somewhere around the outskirts of it, where we can have trees and a garden and a view of hills," said Mr. Garland. "I do not think that we could bear to live all surrounded by bricks and mortar, after our mountain life."

"Oh, goody, goody!" cried Betty, jumping up and dancing around on her tiptoes. "We'll see each other all the time, Primrose! And we can skate in the Park and read the same books and talk about them and we will take you into our Saturday Club and I will show you all my friends; but I'll love you more than any of them; and—oh!—everything!"

As they all laughed at Betty's outburst, they heard a chuckle. At the entrance to the trail stood Joe Silver, looking at them like a good genius, as he was.

Primrose went over to him and took his hand. "We'll think of you all the time, Joe. And, remember, we shall be here every summer with you."

Joe Silver leaned over and looked into her eyes.

"When did you say you'd be here with me?" he asked.

"Every summer, Joe. Surely—every summer," Primrose reiterated.

"Wrong!" said Joe Silver. "Every day." And he turned and walked off into the cottage and got the pail to milk the goats.

Betty knew that Joe Silver meant that Primrose would be with him every day in his thoughts. She felt sorry for Joe, so she ran after him and took his hand.

"Sorry for me, eh?" said Joe Silver to her, with his slow smile and a chuckle. "Wrong again. I'm the happiest man in the hills." He laughed then, but Betty could see that his eyes were a little misty. She patted his hand again and old Joe Silver said, "You're my sort, Elizabeth Anderson," and went on to the goat pen.

Miss Connie, Mr. Anderson, and Betty went home very happy, making plans for the Garlands all the way.

When they reached the Inn Betty went in to her mother's room to tell her "all about it."

"Mother, dear," she said, "it is all happening so beautifully! If only we get good news now of John Candor's baby I shall be sure that this summer was managed by the fairies."

#### CHAPTER XIX

### BETTY'S BIRTHDAY

O N the day before Betty's thirteenth birthday she received this letter from Robert:

CAPE WILDWIND, September 16th.

MY GIRL,

This letter you may read now; but the one in the sealed envelope which I send inside of this is not to be opened under any circumstances until your birthday morning. So restrain your "'satiable curiosity," Miss! I was afraid to wait until the last minute to send it for fear that it might come too late. And that would be too dreadful—it is hard enough not to see my lass on her birthday, without missing my chat with her besides.

Nothing new here, except the ever-changing sea and sky—and they're not so very new, either, now that I think about it a little.

The Captain begins to look a bit disappointed at not hearing from Tim, but Mother Candor and I tell him that it is too early for that. Tim may have been locating the neighbor, who may have moved to another town by this time. Big Tim is not at all a ready letter writer and would probably not cable until he has something to tell. He is a man of action, and will find news for us if there is any to be found, before he writes.

You'd better believe we shall be thinking of you all day long on your birthday, honey. How we wish we could be with you for the good times, and see Primrose and Miss Connie, too! The Candors say Miss Connie is a dear, and I don't mind telling you that I am rather of their opinion myself.

This must be a short and hurry up letter, because the furniture is coming and must be uncrated.

Fondly, BOBBERT.

Enclosed in the letter was a tightly glued envelope marked in big, black letters: NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL SEPTEMBER THE NINETEENTH.

Betty knew that it was Robert's birthday greeting, so she took it to bed with her on the night of the eighteenth that she might open it just as soon as possible after she opened her eyes.

Those bright eyes opened very early indeed on Betty's birthday morning. Strange—is it not?—

how early we do awaken on a birthday, on Christmas, and the Fourth of July! We never need any calling on the mornings of those days of happiness: we will not lose a moment of their good times.

The early sun was just peeping over the hills and the birds were calling "Good-morning" and "Isn't it a fine day?" and all their morning chatter and breaking into gay songs of promise in every branching tree.

"It's my birthday!" cried Betty with her first

thought.

Then she said her morning prayer and drew Robert's envelope from under her pillow and read, her cheeks crimsoning with pleasure, her eyes shining and every dimple showing:

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

When Betty awakes on her birthday morn, the sweetest of maidens that ever was born, she will know that my heart is already awake and blessing the day for my Bettykin's sake. There isn't an aster that opes in September more dainty and gay than the girl I remember; there isn't an apple now ripe on the tree that can seem half as sweet as my Betty to me. And the leaves that

are crimsoning over the hill, they're ruddy and bright, but there's one brighter still who gladdens September and colors the year with the spirit of fun and the lovingest cheer. The goldenrod glowing our good country o'er points out the gold heart of the girl I adore. There's nothing so lovely and nothing so dear in the woods or the meadows this beautiful fall as my precious Bettinka—I wish she were here!— for everyone loves her and she loves them all! May all the good times that my Betty has seen in the dozen good years now so happily o'er make way for still better, now Betty's thirteen. But she can't be more loved—she was dearest before!

Especially to her Brother Robert, who says, "All blessings to my girl!"

Betty kissed the letter and said, "Isn't it darling! It begins my birthday just right, as I knew Bob's letter would."

Betty was very eager to go into her mother's room and see the presents, which she knew must be there. But it was much too early to arouse her parents.

Sleep was out of the question for her and she was too full of the day and its promise to remain in her room. So she dressed quickly and quietly and went down into the sitting-room to

wait by the fire until the grown folk began to wake up.

But it was so very early that she got tired of waiting and slipped on her sweater and ran outdoors to see what kind of a day her birthday was.

It was gorgeous. The fields were full of asters and goldenrod that glistened with dew and morning sunshine. The grassy hillsides were dotted with fallen apples. The trees in the valley and partly up the mountain were gold and scarlet and crimson and orange and soft faded greens, and the trees 'way up the mountains were evergreens, almost black, and above them gray rocks came, and one big mountain had a tiny cap of snow. The sky was a lovely clear transparent blue and the birds were going south across it in great flocks. And all about you you could hear the brooks and the waterfalls. The cows and sheep and shepherd-dogs went by, going to pasture.

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, filling her lungs with the sweet, fresh morning air. "It is a dandy

morning!"

While Betty stood delighting in the view, somebody stole up behind her and put hands over her eyes.

Betty laughed and said, "I know it is you, Mother, dear!" and turned around for her birth-

day kiss. "I always know when it is you, right away. It was dear of you to get up so early."

"I thought Birthday Girl would want to see

her pretties-doesn't she?"

"Oh, yes! I've been perishing to see them for hours and hours—or at least it seems that long."

They went upstairs together.

Mr. Anderson was shaving, but Betty ran to him and got a soapy kiss. Then she flew to the window-seat, where her presents were spread out.

"There's Bob's," said Mrs. Anderson, pointing to a little white velvet box. "I know you

are wild to know what Brother sent."

Betty opened the box and gave a shriek of joy.

"Oh-h! Isn't it the sweetest thing!" she cried. It was a beautiful little necklace of pink coral roses. Betty raved over each rose separately, from the wee buds at the clasp in the back to the wide-open biggest rose in the middle.

"The shades of pink are just exactly like roses!" she said. "I never saw anything so

sweet!"

She kept looking at it over and over, then clasped it around her neck, where it looked very queer on her plain checked gingham frock, and turned to her other remembrances.

Her mother gave her a beautiful set of toilet

silver. She said, as Betty kissed her rapturously for it, "You are big enough now to take real pride in your room and care for it yourself. So I thought you would like these dainty lady-like articles."

"Oh, I do, Mother, dear! And I certainly will be proud of them and take care of them. Such a pretty comb and brush! And this mirror will never make me vain, because I'll always be looking at the back of it; it's so pretty. And the dear little manicure things and the pin tray!"

Then came her father's gift, and Betty was almost too overcome to thank him. She could only squeeze him tight and kiss him. A whole big box of lovely books! Poets—that Betty loved and Primrose knew so well!

"Glad you're so pleased, daughter," Mr. Anderson said. "They are a reward of merit because you have been good and have obeyed me so sweetly in going without much reading this summer, as I asked you."

"They're lovely, dear," rejoiced Betty, reading the titles and admiring the pretty bindings. Then, "Oh, you love of a Daddy!" she cried gleefully. For she had found a gray suède volume, bearing the title: Balaustion's Adventure, by Robert Browning.

They went down into the dining-room and

Betty was deeply touched to see great bunches of goldenrod and asters placed on all the tables and tied on all the posts. "Just as if it were George Washington's birthday, or *Somebody's*, instead of only mine!" she said.

Everybody in the hotel loved little Betty, who had been so willing to serve all the grown-ups and to play Mr. Shiver Strings for their pleasure, and was always so cheery and good-tempered. And everybody in the house had made her something "woodsy and nice," as Betty put it, and set it at her place.

There was a fern-dish of birch bark in which wintergreen vines were growing, all the shiny green leaves set off by bright pink and white and cardinal berries. There were a rustic pencil-box and a petrified-leaf paper-weight, and perfect pressed leaves and ferns, and ever so many other things, all lovely.

Betty went to each guest and made her curtsy and said, "Thank you," as she read the name on her gift. But her happy face thanked the givers more than her words did.

"My dear Miss Connie!" Betty cried, as she opened a tissue-paper parcel and a rainbow fell out—at least it seemed like a rainbow. It was the beautiful rainbow scarf from Naples that

Betty always liked better than any other of Miss Connie's pretty tissues.

She did not know just what to say when she opened Mrs. Althorpe's present, for it was the "grown-uppest" thing! A bag for evening slippers. Of course, Betty was not allowed to go to evening parties, but she said the sweetest and politest thing she could think of, "Thank you so much, Mrs. Althorpe. This will give me something to look forward to."

Everybody smiled, but Mrs. Althorpe was greatly pleased and said, "She has tact. She will be a success some of these days."

After that happy breakfast was over, Betty's mother said, "The upper button of your frock keeps opening, Betty. Go up to your room and bring one of your little neck-pins so that I can fasten it."

Betty ran upstairs for the pin; and opened the door of her room and stood stock-still with amazement.

Right in the middle of the room was something tall and flat, like a screen, covered with paper.

Betty thought it was probably another birthday surprise, but she was not sure and did not know whether or not to unwrap it. She looked it over carefully, however, and found that it was addressed to her. Of course, she was greatly excited and opened it quickly.

Then—Betty actually cried for joy—it was Mr. Garland's wonderful picture of Primrose! The one he had painted for love and would never, never sell!

"It is mine—for my very own!" cried Betty. "Primrose in her dear, faded, blue gingham dress, just as I have seen her so many times, listening to the birds, with the bluebells at her feet and the blue sky overhead!"

In her rapture, Betty forgot all about the neckpin she had gone upstairs to find, and ran downstairs again—or, rather, she floated down like Alice, for she was sure she never touched the steps—to tell her mother how happy she was.

And there was her darling Primrose herself; and Mr. Garland too!

"We have come to wish you a happy birthday," said Mr. Garland.

"I think you have come to bring me one," said Betty. "Anyway, your wish has certainly come true. And, oh, I do thank you a million times for my precious picture of Primrose. I just couldn't believe it was really mine. It is just too wonderful! I am happy, happy, happy over it. I'd rather have it than anything else in the whole wide world!"

The guests at the Inn were very considerate of Mr. Garland; he soon found himself greatly enjoying their society and glad to be back in the world again. They were sweet to Primrose, too, and treated her so naturally that she forgot her shyness and seemed almost as much at home as

Betty did.

Primrose, Betty, and Amico played together all the happy day. Betty pretended to be a mountain guide and showed Primrose the places she knew and loved, close to the Inn, that Primrose had never seen. They walked up Cedar Brook on the stones, and Betty pointed out the log on which Miss Connie had been sitting on the wonderful morning when Betty brought her to the Garlands. They climbed Summer House Slope and the Sand Hill. There they read some of Betty's new books, in the little circle of rocks, back on the Sand Hill summit, that Betty called her library. It is 'way up on the top of the world where you can see ranges and ranges of mountains. They settled themselves with their books in the little shady corners or right in the bright sunshine, and Betty said, "It seems like a dream to be here with you, Primrose. For this library is the place where I have so often sat with my pad in my lap, spending the morning with Robertwriting to him about you."

At luncheon time Joe Silver arrived. He was waiting for them on the porch as they came from the table. He had some packages with him, which he said The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill had sent for Betty's birthday. Betty could not imagine how the little old lady knew about her birthday, and she opened the big packages in wonder. There were a great jar of pickles and two squares of honey in comb and a perfectly tremendous basket of apples that were almost as big as melons. Betty was grateful for the thought and for the "goodies" and bade Joe tell the old lady so.

Then Joe Silver asked Betty, "Are you happy?"

"Very, very, very happy, Joe."

"May you be ever so! I have no gee-gaws that you would like for a present. But I have already given you this for my present," and he put his hand on Primrose's head. "I want you to know, though, that my love to you goes with it."

Betty thought that for Joe Silver to make such a long and tender speech was a birthday present in itself. She told him that his present of Primrose was the very best one of all and that she was glad of his love and thanked him for it and loved him, too.

Joe Silver had to go up the mountain to tend

the goats and the pigeon, because Mr. Garland and Primrose and Amico were going to spend the night at Apple Tree Inn.

"Be sure to come back yourself, Joe," Betty urged. "Because we are going to have a candy pull to-night and we can't do without you."

Joe merely grunted, but they could see that he was pleased and intended to accept the invitation.

The candy pull was held in the old, big, brick-floored kitchen, with its heavy rafters hung with pungent bunches of drying herbs. The massive stove was almost red hot and there was a roaring fire in the huge fireplace too. The low, stone-jambed doors and windows were flung open wide to the cool moonlight night. The oil lamps shone brightly in their highly polished tin and copper brackets. It was all in all a pleasant and inviting place. Piles of apples and cookies on the shelves—free for everybody—and great cool jugs of sweet cider on trays full of glasses, in the corners, added to the charm.

Soon Betty's guests began to arrive, the Andersons and the Garlands and the Althorpes and all the other summer boarders and the good people who kept the Inn and their "help" and Joe Silver and The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill came first. But soon wagons came roll-

ing up to the door to the sound of merry laughter, and all the neighboring farmers and their families crowded in through the low doorway.

Such hearty greetings and lusty jests and loud, friendly bursts of laughter! Everyone had something pleasant to say to Betty because it was her birthday and to Primrose because the news of the changes in her life had gone abroad and they were all happy for her sake.

Soon the syrup was stirring to a boil and smelling delicious. The party was divided into sections. Some shelled nuts, some prepared the popcorn for the popper, some buttered plates and pans and "parceled out" the dabs of butter and flour. In a little while everything was ready and the syrup was ready too, and the corn was beginning to pop over the great open fire.

Such scattering in of nuts and spreading candy into pans and setting out of doors to cool! Such excitement when the fat pug would come too close to the cooling pans of syrup! Such rivalry when the pulling began! Everyone swore that his or her product would be the whitest and crispest. Just wait and see!

Primrose and Betty pulled theirs together. They worked as hard and as steadily as they could. They were sure that their candy would be judged the fairest. It was getting white and

lovely. But they hurried too much, and the candy that got the prize was Joe Silver's! He was the only one who had not boasted of his while it was making. He had not tried very hard either. But his long, slow, powerful, even pulls made his candy as light as taffy and as flaky as snow. The prize was a cook-book called "Candy Making." Joe looked it over with a funny expression when they gave it to him and said, "Thanks. I'll read this in the woods when I'm hungry."

When the candy was all made and was vanishing quickly, the men sat around the fire and told yarns of the mountains, "in the old days before the city folks got to coming"—bear stories and panther stories and fish stories and just storystories about people. They were so exciting that Betty declared she would never sleep again, and Primrose's eyes kept getting bigger and bigger. Primrose's face was so radiant with delight and the wonder and strangeness of everything that Mr. Garland kept looking at her joyfully. Every little while he would ask his little daughter whether she was happy. And when Primrose replied so promptly and gaily, "Yes, indeed!" his eyes would beam with pleasure and thankfulness.

Betty thought that there never could have been a happier birthday and had just said, "I do not believe I could possibly hold any more happiness," when her words were put to the test.

The last wagon from the village drove up and the driver came in, in the midst of the fun, and gave Betty a box that had come by express. It contained a lovely little pearl ring from the Candors.

Betty ran to show it to her mother. "Please keep it for me," she said. "I cannot put it on now because I'm too sticky. Isn't it beautiful? Wasn't it dear of them to send it? The little note said that a sea-fairy made it, and I'm sure it looks as if one did!"

When all the celebration was over and the last of the visitors had driven away and the last of the house people had gone to their rooms and Betty had kissed Primrose good-night and gone to hers, she sat at her little table and wrote a short, sleepy note to her brother:

## APPLE TREE INN, September 19th.

ROBERT DEAR,

A sleepy, happy Betty, who cannot go to bed on her happiest birthday night without speaking to you, says "Thank you" for your lovely present and your lovely letter and your dear, dear self—and will write to you to-morrow.

Your grown-up (?) sister, ELIZABETH ANDERSON, AGE THIRTEEN. Her parents came for their in-bed kisses and looked proudly down on their weary girl, who sighed delightedly and said, "That was the happiest birthday that ever was in the world. I wish I could be half good enough to deserve all the love that people give me."

And a grateful, joyful, thirteen-year-old Betty

dropped off to slumber.

### CHAPTER XX

#### THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK

I T was definitely decided that Betty should go to Cape Wildwind for the Candors' housewarming, but the details had not yet been arranged, when Betty received this letter:

# CAPE WILDWIND, September 22d.

My great, big, grown-up Sister,

I had every bit of your happy birthday with you as I read your joyous letter, Betty Beloved. It made me happy too, as, of course, you know. And I was very deeply touched and pleased that my sleepy Sisterkin could not sleep at the end of that most exciting day without sending a birthday good-night to her big brother.

And now I have news for you. Tim Andrews cabled. He found the neighbor after some difficulty and she remembered that the little blue Bible had been sent to Boston to some number on Marlborough Street. It seems that she could

not remember the number. This is a very slight clew after such a lapse of time since the book was sent; but early next week Captain Candor and I are going to Boston to try to hunt it down.

You must write as soon as you get this, dear, if you can, to say when I should meet you in New York, as I shall probably come right from Bos-

ton to that happy meeting.

I hope that we may not have to injure the housewarming by bringing only disappointment from Boston. I try to feel sure that we shall not—but there seems so little chance of finding a little Miss Candor and a blue Bible in all of great big Boston.

We can but do our best and have trust.

Betty, dear, I think I know why you have felt so often as if you had seen Miss Connie before you met her this summer. As I looked at the little kodak picture of her in the daisy field the reason came to me. That little marble bust of Clyte that I keep on my study table because I think it is the sweetest of faces! Your Miss Connie looks like that. Isn't that what you remembered and yet did not quite remember when you saw her?

Greetings from the sea to the hills and from my heart to thine!

Your B. B. B.

"Mother," asked Betty, "who is to take me to New York to meet Bob? And when am I to start? Robert wants to know quickly, because he has to go to Boston early next week—you'll see all about it in the letter—and he would like to come to New York right after that for me, if possible. I know Father says that he would gladly go down on the boat to New York with me. But I'd hate to break into his vacation."

"Of course, he'd be glad to go, dear. But I feel as you do, that it will be better for him if we can make some other arrangement. For if he gets to the city I fear he will go to his office and do some work instead of returning to the hills immediately. And he needs a good, long, unbroken rest. I shall take you myself, unless some of our friends here should return to New York at the right time. I am sure any of the ladies would be willing to have you in her charge. I am not certain, but I think something was said about the Althorpes going down next week. Perhaps you would like to inquire of Miss Connie."

"Oh! I'd love to go with Miss Connie. Do you think she—or Mrs. Althorpe would mind

taking me?"

"Why, I think not, dear. We shall request them to be very frank about it. I'm sure you would try to be no trouble to them. It would really imply nothing more than getting you a stateroom opening into theirs and just keeping an eye on you. For my capable little lady can do

all her own dressing and buttoning up."

"Well, if they keep just one eye on me, I hope it will be Miss Connie's eye," laughed Betty. "But I think I can behave well enough to be with Mrs. Althorpe a day and a night. I always feel as if the Principal had come into the schoolroom to inspect, when Mrs. Althorpe comes. Well, the Althorpes are out this morning. They are going to a luncheon party in Elizabethtown. Primrose and I are going to Split Rock for our last sewing lesson of the summer. We'll be home for luncheon, and after luncheon, when Miss Connie comes back, I'll ask her when she's going to the city. And, if it should be the right time, you can speak to her. I do hope she can take me, and save you the trip, Mother.—Oh! Here comes Primrose! But where are her frocks? We were to alter Primrose's gingham dresses for a little girl that The Old Woman Under the Hill knows. But Primrose has no bundle. Oh-h! Look at Amico, Mother! He's carrying Primrose's bundles!"

Amico was coming down the road, in his grave, graceful manner; a large bundle was tied upon his

back and he carried a small one in his mouth by the string.

Betty laughed.

"I always thought Amico was like a person as well as a dog," she said, "and now he is like a pony too. I'll run meet them and we can go right over to our lesson. Good-bye, Mother."

It was delightful to walk freely along the road with Primrose, feeling that all the puzzles were at an end.

When they came to the long flat stretch where the road runs alongside of the little, shallow, pebbly river, the girls took Amico's bundles from him, so that he might dart through the stream as he loved to do.

When they reached the little house under the hill the old lady was not at home, but she had left two ginger cookies wrapped in paper on her little bench and a note saying simply: Wait.

So they sat down under one of the apple-trees, munching their cake and throwing bits to Amico, who wagged his tail gratefully.

"I wonder what little girl the dresses are for," said Primrose. "I cannot think of any family around here who might need them. I asked Joe Silver if he knew for whom my dresses were to be altered, and he chuckled and said, 'Yes' in that

funny, all-finished way he has, so that I didn't

ask him any more."

"The thing that bothers me," said Betty, "is how we can make the dresses fit the little girl without seeing her. Mother says it's sometimes harder to alter things so they fit than it is to make new ones. I believe that if the little girl could see her two seamstresses, she'd rather wear the dresses as they are than risk what we might do to them."

"Maybe the old lady has gone to take her measure," Primrose suggested. "It certainly seems strange to think that my frocks will keep on going around in these woods when I am in the city."

"Doesn't it? I hope it will be a sweet girl who wears them. For your dresses—especially the blue gingham ones—just seem a part of you to me, Primrose."

"Here comes our teacher now. We shall soon know all about it."

Their little sewing teacher came briskly down the slope and after a short, "Morning! Morning!" went straight to business and began opening the bundles and examining the dresses.

Betty had been a little bit astonished that The Old Woman Under the Hill had never said anything to her about her part in getting the Gar-

lands off of the mountain. But she remembered her former preachment, that it was silly to expect praise for doing our duty, and supposed that that was the reason for her silence.

Therefore she was quite startled when the Old Woman turned to her very suddenly in the midst of looking over the dresses, and said, "Elizabeth! I knew you were a Can Person! Proud to be a friend of yours," and then went on talking about the frocks.

Primrose shouted to her deaf little teacher, "How are we going to tell what size to make them?"

"By doing the hardest thing little girls know—waiting to find out," was the reply. Then the Old Woman added, "Go on outside, now, and wait, while I try the dresses on the person they are intended for."

"Try them on her—here? Is the little girl here?" called out both the pupils at once.

"If she is you will see her," was all the answer they received. So they laughed and looked at each other wonderingly and went outside to wait as they were bidden.

"I don't believe anybody's there; do you?" began Betty.

Primrose knit her brows.

"I cannot see where anybody could be hidden

—or why anybody should be hidden. But she certainly said she was going to try the dresses on someone; didn't she?"

Just then the Old Woman called out, "Come, see how they fit!" and the little girls ran in as

quickly as they could.

And there was The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill laughing heartily, standing in the middle of the room in one of Primrose Garland's dresses.

It fit her almost perfectly, needing only to have the hem let down a trifle. For she was a very little old woman, indeed.

Primrose and Betty laughed heartily too.

"Are they for you, yourself?" they cried.

Their teacher nodded.

"I needed 'em. And I knew Primrose'd like me to have 'em—eh?"

Primrose gave an eager assent to that, and the Old Woman continued, "And they're so faded and dull I won't feel out of place in pink and blue instead of gray. Well, well, well! First time it paid to be so little since I fell out of a tree and stuck on a snag and couldn't reach the rocks with my head."

Primrose kissed her and said she was delighted to have her wear her dresses. Then the girls set to work, ripping out hems and making new ones, while their teacher busied herself with Primrose's new dresses of the pretty fabrics Miss Connie had bought.

The morning went busily and happily and soon it was time to go to the Inn for luncheon.

All the sharpness went out of the Old Woman's manner as she said "Good-bye" to her pupils; for it was Primrose's last sewing lesson and she knew that it would be lonely in the little house under the hill when Primrose's gentle presence did not come there to brighten it.

Primrose realized what her good, little, old friend was feeling and she said in her clearest tones, close to her side, "This is only the last lesson until next summer, you know."

The old lady's eyes grew moist as she kissed her. Then she kissed Betty too, and followed them to the turn in the road and stood on her stone for a long time waving to them and shouting, "Good-bye, Primrose. Good-bye, Elizabeth. Be on time for the next lesson, early in June."

Primrose was quiet and thoughtful on the way home, for she loved The Little Old Woman Under the Hill who had been so kind to her.

Betty felt tenderly, too, at the parting, but she soon began to think about Miss Connie's return that afternoon and to wonder whether the Althorpes would take her to meet Robert. When luncheon was over and Primrose and Amico had departed, Betty sat in the hammock with one of her new birthday books—for now she was allowed to read again as often as she liked—to wait for the Althorpes' return.

As their carriage drove up at last and the Althorpes entered the house, Mrs. Anderson said to Betty, "Wait, my dear, until Miss Connie has had a chance to bathe and rest. For the roads to Bettytown are very dusty to-day."

Betty dutifully waited what seemed ages to her until Mrs. Althorpe came down to the porch all fresh and smart in a crisp new frock. Then she went upstairs to Miss Connie's room and knocked at her door.

Miss Connie called out, "Who is there?" "It's Betty."

"Come in, my dear."

And Betty walked in, not knowing that she was entering the greatest adventure of her life.

Miss Connie was sitting by the window reading. She motioned to Betty to sit beside her and put the book between them on the window-seat.

Betty glanced down at the book, as all booklovers do, and she saw that it was a little blue Bible.

Now, Bibles in blue silk bindings are not common, and, besides, Betty remembered what Rob-

ert had said, that she should look inside of every blue Bible she saw, hoping for the right one to cross her path some day.

So she said timidly, "If you please, Miss Con-

nie, may I look at that little book?"

Miss Connie picked up the book and held it a moment, then she said seriously, "Yes, little Betty, you may; because you are my friend. Only my friends may see that book, my dear, because it is very precious."

Betty kissed Miss Connie for calling her her friend, for she felt very proud of that. And she took the book, as Miss Connie offered it to her, and opened it gently and carefully, and turned to the fly-leaf and saw there, in a fine, faded, old handwriting: To John, who cannot sail so far as to pass the boundaries of Mother's love.

Betty felt all quivery. She felt herself grow pale. Her hands trembled so that she could hardly hold the little volume. But she said firmly, "That is John Candor's Bible."

Then Miss Connie began to quiver too and she got paler than Betty and asked in a shaking voice:

"What do you know about John Candor?"

Betty tried to tell her. She did not know how to begin and she was so excited she could not make herself very clear. Right in the midst of Betty's speaking, Miss Connie called out, "Grandmother, Grandmother!" and Betty ran down to the porch to get Mrs. Althorpe and brought her back to Miss Connie's room.

Betty tried again. Miss Connie was as white as paper and Mrs. Althorpe was as red as could be. They tried to make Betty tell it quietly, but she could not. She was so worked up.

So Miss Connie sent one of the maids for Bet-

ty's mother.

Mrs. Anderson was always cool and serene; she said calmly—though inwardly she was excited and thrilled too when she realized what had happened—"I will tell you all about it myself. I think Betty had best go into her own room and lie down for a while. Mother will come and tell you, dear, whatever there is that can be told. But you are overwrought now and must be quiet."

"Yes—I will, Mother," said obedient Betty. "But there is one thing I must do, if you'll let me. Please, please, please, Mother, dear! Let me telegraph to Robert right away that the blue Bible has been found. Please!"

"Very well, dear. And then go straight to your room and rest until Mother comes."

So Betty went down into the office and asked

for a telegraph blank and wrote with trembling fingers:

APPLE TREE INN, September 23d.

To Mr. Robert Anderson, Hotel Hillard, Cape Wildwind.

The blue Bible is found. A letter is coming. Love.

BETTY.

#### CHAPTER XXI

#### THE CANDORS' GRANDCHILD

BETTY said afterward that the time she lay on the bed, waiting for her mother to come, seemed longer than a year. She was so anxious to know how Miss Connie Althorpe got the Candors' Bible and whether it would lead to the finding of John Candor's baby, that she thought she simply could not wait in patience. But Betty knew that her mother did not wish her to get overexcited, so she tried to be as quiet as she could and think of other things. But, of course, she did not succeed very well.

When at last Mrs. Anderson came into Betty's room, Betty thought that her mother looked over-excited herself. For her cheeks were bright and her eyes glowing.

"Oh! I'm glad you've come! I nearly died waiting. May I know all about it, Mother?"

"Yes, dear, everything. Only lie quietly while Mother tells you. Once upon a time, Betty, there was a very fashionable American family who went to live in England. They liked things very proper and splendid and thought that fashionable English things and English customs and people would be more so than those they found at home."

"Mrs. Althorpe?" ventured Betty.

"Now wait, dear, and listen," said her mother, smiling. "All the members of this family cared a great deal for style and propriety and form and class distinctions except one daughter. She was very simple-hearted and loved plain folks and preferred simple living and hated so many receptions and grand, formal entertainments and all the rest of it.

"This daughter and her mother did not understand each other very well and sometimes had unhappy times, though they loved each other dearly. For, when her mother took her to party after party, the daughter was longing for a garden and the seashore or a tramp in the hills. And when the mother went to these plain pleasures with her daughter she found herself unable to enjoy them and wished for her carriage and her brilliant dinners instead.

"So, at last, they were not together very often, but the daughter made friends of her own sort and did not 'play' very much with the rest of her fashionable family.

"Soon she met a young sailor and fell in love

with him and married him. He was a very well educated, well-bred, good young man and not rough or uncouth at all. He came from fine, honest American stock—"

"John Candor!" whispered Betty.

Her mother only smiled and continued. "But the fashionable family never found out how pleasant a gentleman this sailor was, never knew that he was a man of whom they need not be ashamed. They never were even willing to meet him. They thought that all men who followed the sea must be crude and uncultivated and it was enough for them that this daughter had married a sailor. They felt that she had disgraced them and they were very angry and went away from England, home to America, for they thought that they could never face their English friends again.

"That must have grieved the daughter, of course. But she and her sailor husband loved each other and were happy together. But on one of his voyages he was drowned. And the young wife died, too, leaving a little baby girl behind

her.

"When the sad news reached the young wife's fashionable mother, she came and got the little child from the neighbor who was taking care of it. The fashionable family brought the baby up and called it by their own name, instead of the

name of its sailor father, whose people they did not know or seek, at that time, to find."

A great thought had been dawning, fairly burst-

ing in Betty's mind.

"Mother!" she exclaimed. "What is Miss Connie Althorpe's really, truly name?"

"Joan Constance Candor!"

"After John Constant Candor! Oh, it must be true! Oh, it is true! My darling Miss Connie is John Candor's baby and Mother and Captain Candor's own true grandchild! Oh!"

"Yes, yes, it is true. Let us give thanks, dear,

-especially for poor Mrs. Althorpe."

"For-whom, mother?" asked Betty in sur-

prise.

"For Mrs. Althorpe, my dear. For I think she has suffered the most; she has been very penitent, and has regretted in sorrow for many, many years that she was so stern to her daughter and to John Candor. She has long tried to find some trace of Miss Connie's relations. She doesn't care as much for showy outside things as she used to and she is deeply happy and relieved that the Candors are found."

Betty looked a little dubious.

"Well, I'm glad for her, then," she said. "But, oh, I'm a million, billion, trillion, quadrillion times gladder for Miss Connie's other grand-

mother. I can't help it, Mother. Dear Mother Candor will be so happy! Isn't it wonderful that Miss Connie is the Candors' grandchild and Primrose's cousin too? I wish she were something to me."

"So she is, dear. She is a loving friend. You may be sure that she will love you forever for being the means of finding her father's people. She and Mrs. Althorpe are resting now. I am going in to talk to them a little while. Then they will write to the Candors and I will write to Robert and explain all the wonderful happenings and our girl's part in them. There will not be another wagon going down until late this evening. So there will be lots of time for our letters. We need not hurry to write them. What will you do, dear?"

Betty laughed.

"If you will give me a dime for a special delivery stamp," she said, "I'm going to write a note to Bob this very, hurriest instant and get mine off first. This minute! I want to be the one to tell him."

"But there is no wagon going down, child!"
"H'm. I don't need a wagon. I'll go on to
the village on the back of a farmer's cart, Mother,
—or walk, if none comes along. I can't possibly
wait."

On the tail of the next farmer's cart that went jogging down the dusty road sat a hatless, brownhaired little girl, smiling radiantly, with joy beaming in every dimple, and a letter held tightly in her hand.

The letter said:

APPLE TREE INN, Joy Day.

O ROBERT!

My darling Miss Connie is John Candor's baby.

We have found her for dear Mother Candor and the Captain.

Her real name is Joan Constance Candor and not Althorpe at all.

They are all writing to you and to the Candors. But they are talking and talking. So mine is done first and I am the one to tell you.

I must run now to get a ride on a farmer's cart and catch the very first mail that goes.

Anyway, I am too happy to talk about it.

Your

BETTY IN A BEAUTIFUL DREAM.

### CHAPTER XXII

#### HOW THE CANDORS RECEIVED THE NEWS

MRS. ALTHORPE, Miss Connie, and all the Andersons were very eager for the first mail from Cape Wildwind.

Miss Connie had been looking forward with tenderest anticipations to her first letter from her father's people, from her newly found grandparents.

Ah! We know the Candors well enough now to be sure that it was a sweet, welcoming, beautiful letter, a letter that made the granddaughter feel herself a real part of their family, a real child of their heart. They told her all about her father, and what a good son and worthy man he had been and how their hearts had brooded over him all these years and how the hope of seeing her and loving her had been the dearest hope of their lives.

They wrote kind little notes to Mrs. Althorpe, too, that made that severe old lady soften very much and wipe her eyes and say that she regretted

more and more her cold bitterness that long ago had kept her from knowing them from the beginning.

There were good letters for Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, also.

But Betty thought that her letter from Robert must certainly be the best of all. In the first place, it contained a little note from Mother Candor to Mr. Garland and Primrose, inviting Primrose to the housewarming with Betty! And, in the second place, it was a good letter in itself and told what Betty was wishing to know—how the Candors received the good news:

# CAPE WILDWIND, September 26th.

FAIRY GODMOTHER BETTY,

It is good to be alive in such a happy world with everything just right in it. It is wonderful, blessed, and to be praised for with hallelujahs.

And it is good, better, best to be the brother of a little lass who helps to make things so fine and splendid.

When your telegram came I was dazed. I did not see how it could be true. But I knew that my careful Elizabeth is always accurate in her statements and would never say anything to give false hopes, even the tiniest bit. So your reputation helped me to believe that this miraculous thing was so.

Thus fortified, I ran the whole way to the Candor cottage. It seemed that the distance was greater than I had ever thought it. I couldn't wait until I got there. I sprinted my best.

Mother Candor was on the porch, calmly buying vegetables from a vendor. Captain Candor was on the roof mending a place that needed it.

Just as if nothing had happened!

The good little lady saw the yellow paper in my hand and the joyous excitement in my face. In accord with her habit of thinking of others before herself, she jumped to the conclusion that I had some particularly fine news of my own to tell her. She came to meet me, after finishing with the vendor, laughing with pleased anticipation and asked me what good news I had to tell.

"For," said she, "your eyes look exactly like a torchlight parade, and I'm sure it is something splendid."

I waited until she was seated in her porch rocker, for I was afraid of the shock's upsetting her.

I said, "Yes, dear little mother,—the very best news in the world."

She looked at me closely a second. She seemed to feel, then, what was coming.

"Of John's child!" she whispered.

"Good news of John's daughter," I replied and was about to show her the telegram. But she put out her hand to stop me.

"Wait," she said. "We must not go on without Father. I do not wish to learn the good news

before he does."

Then we called the Captain down from the roof and I showed them the telegram.

Mother Candor took the good news quite calmly, although her eyes were brimming and the pink of her pretty cheeks about ten shades deeper than usual.

"I always expected it," said she.

But the Captain who had braved so many dangers of the deep, the Captain who had faced all life's troubles with such a courageous front, sat down on the cottage steps and put his head in his hands and sobbed for joy as if he could never stop. Mother Candor sat down beside him and put her hand on his shaggy head and said, "There, there, my dear. You are going to have your reward at last." So I slipped away. This was not a time for even the lovingest intrusion.

In the afternoon began our guesses and wonderings. We simply couldn't imagine what you had found or whom; whether you had stumbled upon only the blue Bible or had really found John's child or some trace of her.

Almost immediately Mother Candor guessed the truth. She said she felt in her bones it was "sweet Connie"—that nothing else would explain the great love she had felt for her from the moment she had heard about her, and the impulse she had had to keep her picture, as something specially belonging to her. She was quite positive that that was the solution and told us not to disturb ourselves with guessing further, because it was all settled. I think she might have been a little disappointed if it had turned out differently. The Captain and I scarcely dared hope for anything so perfect; but Mother Candor had no doubt whatever.

Since your dear little letter and afterward all the other great letters came, they have been the happiest people alive. And all their sons and daughters and grandchildren are as excited as they. John must have meant very much to his sisters and brothers, for they look forward to meeting his daughter with something more than aunt and uncle affection—it is because she is his daughter that she is so precious to them.

Of course you know that Miss Connie is coming with you to the housewarming—the heart-

warming, Captain Candor calls it. But you do not know that the Candors have written to Mr. Garland—you will find their note enclosed in this letter—and invited Primrose to come, too. Do try to get her to come with you and Miss Connie, so that we may all be together in that new home of delight.

We think it sweet and right of Mrs. Althorpe to have written that she will follow and will come to Wildwind, too, before that week of festivity is over. She says she wants very much to know the Candors and to love them. And she accepted the blame for all the difficult years that have passed. So, Mrs. Althorpe has a warm, good heart under her cold and fashionable exterior; and that proves that we mustn't judge people by their outsides, but try to be sure we understand before we make up our minds about them; doesn't it?

We are working in a glow of joy, getting the new house ready for that joyous occasion coming now so soon, when the Candors and I are to have our three visitors, and the new house is to be opened in its beauty. I won't tell you anything about the preparations, for that would spoil the surprise. But it will be dandy, Betty Bounce, and your eyes will be like Mother Candor's torchlight procession.

I am instructed to tell you that Mr. Shiver

Strings is especially invited, and that we are all eager to have him of the party. I told the Candors that you would be glad to bring him, because you always play your violin "for joy and not for showing off," as you said a few years ago. And there will be joy here, you'd better believe.

Even the ocean seems joyful to-day, and makes me think of what Kipling says of his own ocean,

'way over in Asia:

The Injian ocean sets and smiles, So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue!

My heart is settin' an' smilin', too—because I'm telling it and it's telling me that Betty is coming to her

B. B. B.

Betty met her father and mother and Miss Connie in the tree-house.

"The Candors have invited Primrose to go with you and me to the housewarming, Miss Connie," she said. "Oh! Do you think Mr. Garland will let her?"

"Think? I just know that he will. You leave that to me, Betty dear. We'll ask him to-day, when we go up the mountain to help Primrose and Mr. Garland pack their books. But I know he will consent."

"Oh! It seems too good to be true!" said Betty.

"It does, indeed," Miss Connie agreed. "I cannot believe it is all real—that I have found my grandparents and the Garlands, too, and that all my new relations are so lovely. Betty has told me all about them in this last day or two," she explained, "and let me read parts of her brother's letters about them. I know I'd adore the Candors, even if they did not belong to me. It does seem too good to be true, as Betty says."

"Now, in that I do not agree with you," said Mr. Anderson. "I always disagree when people say that anything is too good to be true. For the best things are true—and the truest things are best, too—like loving families and all-out-doors

and simple kindness."

"Well, one thing is true and good, both," said Betty. "I certainly am a happy person. And I think everything is just exactly right. Now, if you grown-ups will just arrange about the time we must start for the housewarming, and let me know the very date as soon as possible, I'll be glad, for Joe and I are planning a surprise."

"I think you and Joe Silver have conspired and plotted about enough for one summer," laughed

Mr. Anderson.

"Oh, but this isn't a serious plot, like the other,

## 296 THE KIND ADVENTURE

This is just a jolly one. But it's a nice one, and you'll like it. So please hurry up and decide." And she smiled back at her parents, mysteriously, as she and Miss Connie went off together to help the Garlands to pack.

### CHAPTER XXIII

#### FAREWELL TO THE HILLS

THIS was Betty's last letter to Robert:

ALBANY, October 1st.

DEAR,

It is all real; yet it does not seem as if it could happen to one little girl to have all her wishes come true.

We have left the hills; we are on our way to you.

We came down on the train to Albany, Mrs. Althorpe and Miss Connie, and my dearest Primrose and I. We are staying a day at this hotel, because Mrs. Althorpe has some old friends here in Albany whom she always stops to see on her way from the Adirondacks. We shall go back to New York on the day-boat to-morrow morning. I know Primrose will be perfectly wild with joy over the Hudson River, for I love its beauty so

much myself. Then Mrs. Althorpe will go home for a few days and Miss Connie, Primrose and I will take the train for Cape Wildwind and for YOU.

Primrose and Miss Connie are out now, looking at the sights of Albany and going through the State House; but I have seen these things so often that I said I'd rather stay in the room and write to you about our farewell to the mountains, and the surprise Joe Silver and I planned, and how darling everybody was to us.

They were all truly grieved to have Primrose go away—all the country people were. But she told them that this was not real good-bye, because she must go back and help Mr. Garland pack up. Father has promised to take her back on one of his trips in a week or so. We think—Mother and I—that the real reason for her going back is that Primrose and Mr. Garland would prefer to say their good-byes to the woods from their own little house on the mountain, when all the rest of us are gone and only their old country friends are around them.

Primrose and her father are going to live in the suburbs of New York. Amico and the pigeon will be happy there, because it is like the country. Primrose and I are going to spend all the time we can and every vacation—Christmas and Easter and everything—together, as long as we live. For, of course, we are dearest friends.

Now, I will tell you about the surprise. It was a good-by party that Joe and I planned for Primrose and as a sort of glad ending for this gladdest summer.

Joe Silver is a funny person to plan a party with. He just sits still and lets you make the suggestions; and, if he doesn't like them, he just keeps on sitting still, and if he does like them he gets up right away and begins to do them while you are talking.

Well, this is what we did:

On the evening before we left, the hotel porches were lighted with yellow paper lanterns and funny little jack-o'-lanterns made of squashes, because the pumpkins are not ready yet. And all the country folks came, and the few people left in the hotel and in the village boarding-house came, too.

It was a real country party, though. For we knew Primrose would like that best. We had country dances—"real dancing like you meant it," The Old Woman Under the Hill said, "not just tiptoeing and sliding around as I see you city folks do."

And some of the country people sang sweet, old-fashioned songs. Some of them made Father's

eyes get moist because his mother used to sing them to him when he was little.

And there was one old, old man with a fiddle and they asked him to play a jig so that another old fellow could dance it, and he was as shy as a girl and said he was afraid to play before so much company. But he didn't want to be unpleasant, so he began in a little scared way, quite trembling. So I slipped out and went upstairs and got Mr. Shiver Strings; then I stood beside the old man and began to play with him, very gently. Of course, I had to follow him for a while, for I did not know his jig. Well, that gave him confidence and soon we were both playing so loud and merrily that not only the other old man but also all the guests were up and jigging. Even the old fiddler himself was dancing and playing at the same time and I was keeping in step behind him, still playing Mr. Shiver Strings!

You never saw anything so gay.

Mrs. Althorpe was the only one who did not jig. But when we were seated and laughing and panting, she asked me if I could play a minuet. And I did. And Mrs. Althorpe got up and danced it! She was so graceful and fine and dainty! You have no idea how pretty it was. She acted so well that you could imagine her

partner just as if he were there. I knew, as I watched Mrs. Althorpe dance, what Mother means when she says she hopes I will be a lady in the old sense of that word. To be as lady-like as Mrs. Althorpe and fine and delicate when I am as old as she is would be perfectly lovely—but, of course, I'd like to be a little warmer, too, and have more fun. She certainly did have fun that evening, though, and everybody was delighted with Mrs. Althorpe's dancing.

Miss Connie sang for us, beautifully. And then one old country gentleman went over to Primrose and spoke to her and she went and spoke to her father and he said, "Do, dear."

And then Primrose—blushing and shy and looking so sweet in a pale-blue muslin—came and sang. Her father whistled for her a gentle obligato. I will copy out the words for you—Primrose wrote them down for me. I wish I could send you the tune. It was lovely. And Primrose made the words and the music all herself! This is what she sang:

A little bird flies
Through distant skies—
He loves to be off on the wing;
But he builds his own nest
In the place he loves best,

And there will the little bird sing. Oh! There will the happy bird sing!

And so will my heart
O'er earth's beauty dart
And love to be off on the wing;
But it's builded its nest
With the friends it loves best
And here in the hills it can sing.
Oh! Here will my loving heart sing!

At the end of each stanza, Primrose sang like a bird in that wonderful way the birds taught her.

All the people knew that Primrose meant her song as a message to them that she would always love her mountain friends and love this place the best of all places. They are a quiet people and never do much talking, but they showed Primrose that they understood and were deeply touched. Primrose is very dear to everybody.

After the singing, we popped corn and had goodies. It was a lovely party. Joe and I shook hands when it was over, because it had been a success and we were pleased with ourselves.

In the morning, very early, Primrose and I went all over the places that were so dear to us and kissed them all good-by. We blew kisses on our fingers in each one and said, loud

and clear, "Good-by, dear Glen! Good-by, dear Road! Good-by, dear Trail! Good-by, dear Falls! Good-by, until next summer!" Of course, Primrose will see them a little bit more this year; but we wanted to say our good-by to our "together places" together.

As we came down the Job Road for the last time this summer together, Joe Silver and The Old Woman Who Lives Under the Hill stepped out of the bushes. The Old Woman kissed us and Joe shook hands with us. They were both smiling very proudly and happily and the Old Woman said, "Heaven bless you both!" and Joe Silver said "Amen." So they just stood beaming at us as we went back toward the hotel. They have good reason to beam, for they made so much of the happiness and we hope that Heaven will bless them, too.

Everybody was out on the porch as we rode away in the wagon. They waved flags and rang the big dinner-bell and blew horns and sang out merry messages.

We felt very tenderly and very happy and our eyes were full of tears and laughing, all at the same time.

So our wonderful summer in the woods and the hills ended happily and gaily and there are even happier times coming now. And we have very thankful hearts.

Now I'm coming to you quickly, dearest Brother.

Catch me!

BETTY.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## DELIGHT AT CANDOR COTTAGE

As the slow little shore train puffed along the beach, through white sand-dunes waving their grassy emerald plumes against a glittering blue sea and sky, all three of our travelers were silent with excitement.

Miss Connie was the most deeply moved, for she knew that just behind the turn in the shore that appeared now and then in the distance lay the village where her newly found grandparents and all the relatives of her father waited to welcome her.

Primrose was thrilled with her first journey into company, with the joy of traveling with Betty and the pleasant opening of her life into wider vistas. But, above all, Primrose's heart beat high with joy and awe at the sight of the sea.

Betty's eyes kindled because the story of the summer was ending so splendidly. And was she not going to see the Candors and bring them their long-lost "baby"? And was she not going

straight into the arms of that most glorious of brothers?

Now the train was making its last turn. Wraps and suit-cases were gathered up.

Now the little red station came in sight. Pas-

sengers rose to their feet.

"There's Robert! There!"

"And there's the Captain—I'm sure it is he!"

"And Mother Candor getting out of the carriage!"

"Isn't she lovely?"

"Oh, joy!"

There was joy indeed.

While Bob held Betty fondly, Mother Candor and the Captain drew Miss Connie to their hearts and kissed her. They would hold her at arm's length and look at her and then, as if very much pleased with what they saw, they would give little runs to her and kiss her again.

Primrose stood by, smiling delightfully at the

happy sight.

Then Robert had to become acquainted with Primrose and Miss Connie, and the Candors had to kiss and welcome the little girls; and every one was so overjoyed and it was all so real and hearty that by the time they were all tucked in the carriage going to the Candors' old house, they were all old friends and the Candors and Miss Connie seemed just as much grandparents and granddaughter as if they had been together all the time.

"Isn't it sweet to see them?" Betty whispered to Primrose.

Primrose and Betty sat, one on each side of Robert, on the back seat of the carriage, all holding hands. And the Captain and Mother Candor sat on the front seat, one on each side of Miss Connie, with their arms around her. And every few minutes one of them would kiss her and she would kiss them back again.

"Don't you think they make a pretty picture, Bob?" asked Betty.

Robert said he never thought there could be anything so pretty in the world. Miss Connie overheard Betty's question and Robert's answer and something in his tone made her blush as rosy as a pink.

The Candors made almost as much fuss over Betty and Primrose as they did over Miss Connie herself, and kept turning about every few minutes to beam at them.

Mother Candor said, "I'd have known either of you, my dears, anywhere in the world, because you look exactly like yourselves."

That was such a funny thing to say that it made them both laugh, and their laughing made

the Candors laugh; and there was not a bit of strangeness after that, for laughing together is the very best way to make friends.

When they reached the old cottage, all the sons and daughters and grandchildren of the Candor family came running to meet them. They were sweet and hospitable to Primrose and Betty, and, as for Miss Connie, of course they were beside themselves with joy over her.

They all called her Constance, which seemed a little queer to Betty at first. But she soon felt that it suited her far better than Connie, and she was glad that they chose it.

Miss Connie went off with her new family to get better acquainted, and Robert took Betty and Primrose down to the beach.

Primrose was "perfectly wild," as Betty put it, over the sea. Betty had never seen her quiet little friend so excited. She kept running down to the water's edge and looking and looking.

"It looks," she said to Robert, with whom she had felt at ease from the start, "it looks like the clouds when you look down upon them from the top of Mt. Marcy. Only the sea is more mighty," she added in her quaint, grown-up way. "The clouds are like a dream of the sea."

The rocks and the shells and the sand gave intense pleasure to her. And when Robert took

the little girls for a sail in The Violet Dawn, she was in ecstasy.

They all gathered in the Pine Grove for luncheon, the whole Candor clan and their Constance, and Robert and his Betty and her Primrose.

The younger members of the Candor family made friends with Betty and Primrose and started immediately forming plans for their entertainment.

There were so many of these young Candors that Betty said it was like having a club in your own family; and one small boy informed her with great pride, "Well, we have got a baseball team, all in the family, and we hold the pennant, too."

The grown-up Candors thought the little girls charming. They did all they could to make Primrose feel thoroughly at home; and they thanked Betty so often and profusely for finding the blue Bible that she felt she had to say, "You're thanking me more than I deserve. Indeed you are. For, really, I did nothing but keep my eyes open as Bob had asked me."

Then they began praising Betty's dear Bob, too, and that pleased her more and made her prouder of him than ever, if possible. Miss Connie said that he was the only young man she had ever seen who was good enough to be Betty's brother. And Robert said that now he

felt as Betty did, that his reward was greater than his merits.

Miss Connie went to rest with her new aunts and cousins in the afternoon, and Primrose and Betty and the other children played on the beach, while Robert and their host and hostess went to the new cottage to prepare for the housewarming that evening.

After the early supper, just before twilight, in that long, pale-glowing, colorful light that Browning calls "the quiet colored end of evening," a little bell rang out from the tower of the new

cottage.

"They're ready! It's beginning! Come on! Come on!" the Candor children cried out. It was the summons to call all the family and friends to the housewarming.

People began to gather there from all quarters. The Candor cottage, new as it was, seemed to have grown right out of the rocks and the sands and the pines and the sea—which is just what a house should do to its surroundings. Some seaside cottages, and houses in other places, too, look as if they had been dropped down by mistake and really belonged to some other part of the world entirely. They look homesick and queer and as if they just couldn't get used to their neighborhood. But the Candor Cottage

looked as if it fitted that particular spot best on earth and couldn't possibly be as happy anywhere else in the world.

The family and guests gathered in the rocky garden in the twilight, just as a slender moon slipped up over the cloud-tops and the first stars pierced the dull evening-blue of the sky.

To each one was given a lighted lantern—not paper Japanese lanterns, but ship lanterns, as was appropriate to the Candors—and a long

taper.

"I wonder what they're for," cried Betty.

"Look!" Primrose exclaimed. "Something is written on the lanterns."

To be sure, the lanterns were marked in gold paint: Friendship, Patience, Peace, Love, Faith, Service, and lots of other virtues and good qualities. Every one looked to see what his or her lantern said. Robert's friend, Ronald, got Perseverance; and that made all his friends laugh, for they said that nobody had more of that quality than Ron. Primrose and Betty both received Friendship lanterns. They were very glad and thought it a singular coincidence and took it for a sign that they would be always friends. But Robert's eyes twinkled so that some people suspected that their getting the two Friendship lanterns might not be so hard to explain.

The people looked lovely and fairylike moving about in the evening light with the lighted lanterns. Every one wondered what was to be done with the tapers, but the guests were not told. They were merely instructed to keep them.

As it grew darker beach-fires flared up all around and gave the place a very festive look.

Then all the children of the village—the grandchildren and grandnieces and nephews of the Candors and their little friends—took hands in a circle around the cottage. The ring reached all the way around. They all wore white dresses or white suits and had long blue scarfs, with silver stars on them, floating around them like a mist.

"It is like a fairy ring! I never saw anything

so exquisite," said Betty.

"Father has a copy of a picture called The Pleiades," said Primrose. "It is just like that."

The circle of children began to move around in a graceful dancing measure, and hidden guitars began to play, and the children sang sweetly:

> We are weaving a charm, a charm To keep this beautiful home from harm, We are weaving a wonderful grace To bless this beautiful dwelling-place.

Love weaves the charm, Love weaves the grace, The charm and the grace That bless this place!

We are blessing the home, a home For all good friends who ever may come; We are blessing this heart, these hearts With every good that our love imparts.

Love bless the hearts,
Love bless the home,
The hearts and the home
To which friends may come!

Then there were fireworks—such lovely ones! But the brightest of all the pyrotechnics was Primrose Garland, who had never seen fireworks in all her life before and nearly leaped into the air after the rockets with rapture.

Captain Candor said that nobody would have been able to tell her from a rocket if she had succeeded in following one into the heavens, for her face was as bright as any of them.

Then the choir from the little church where the Candors had worshiped all their lives sang a lovely hymn.

The last fireworks flared up with the words: Welcome All.

"That is the sign that we are to go into the house," said Robert. "I thought those the most

appropriate words for the Candors, for they certainly do welcome all."

Inside the house, Betty thought, was even

prettier than without.

"Hustle, hustle!" Robert had said. "I want you to be among the first to enter, because I want you to see it before it is all hidden by the crowds."

It was cosy and yet roomy, simple and clear of all claptrap and foolish ornament and yet so beautiful and homey and comfortable!

"Captain Candor always said that he wanted a home that should be as trim and shipshape as a good vessel and yet as pretty and graceful and sweet as a flower-garden," said Robert. "And that is what this house is."

"It looks like just the right frame for my

grandparents," said Miss Connie.

"That is what it was meant to be," answered the gratified young architect, Robert. "And I'm sure they will be as happy as they are beautiful and kind in it."

In the immense stone fireplace a great fire was laid but not lighted, though the evening was beginning to be chilly. Then the guests soon saw what their tapers were for. Each of them lighted a taper at his or her lantern and then applied the taper light to the big pile of kindling. Soon the great fire was burning brilliantly—all lighted from the tapers of loving friends and kinsfolk and from the flame of the precious virtues.

"Oh, isn't that a beauteous idea!" Primrose cried.

All sat round the fire, the children on the big rug and the grown-ups on chairs and window-seats and the seats in the ingle nook. There they had a "folksy" time—that is what the Captain called it—talking and laughing and having refreshments.

The Captain and his friends told some thrilling sea-stories that made the "landlubbers" eyes open.

They played games and had charades, and Miss Connie sang so sweetly that all the Candors were prouder of her than ever. And Betty's sweet Primrose sang, too; and the children were enraptured with the sounds of the forest that she kept in her slim little throat. And Mr. Shiver Strings did his best, to everybody's delight, while Miss Connie accompanied him on the pretty little new piano that was the pride of Mother Candor's heart.

Mother Candor announced that she was going to learn to play the piano, too. She said, "I'm not too old, at all. I'll put to shame some of my grandchildren who will not practice; you shall see!"

"How can she be too old for anything she wishes to do, with such a spirit of youth in her heart?" said Robert.

Then everybody sang together and that was the best of all.

And then a voice outside called, very loud and merry, "Captain Candor, ahoy!"

"It's Tim Andrews!" cried Mother Candor exultantly. "We cabled for him to come; but we scarcely dared hope he could get here in time."

They opened the door and there stood the big, bearded, red-haired man, with his hands extended in greeting.

It was charming to see the Candors greet him as if he were their son. For their John's devoted friend was indeed like another son to them.

They led Miss Connie to him and told him that she was John Candor's baby, and he kissed her and said, "You see, I'm a sort of uncle of yours, my dear," and that made everybody laugh.

Then Tim looked around, letting his radiant smile shine on all the assembly, and he saw Betty and Primrose.

He pointed to Betty and asked, "Who's the pansy blossom?" and to Primrose, asking, "Who's

the bit of sunny spray?" And that set them laughing again.

But the Captain soon said, "Let us not forget to give thanks for our great joy!" and Ronald's father, the Dominie, led them in simple thanksgiving, while Miss Connie played very gently on the piano, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

When Miss Connie and Primrose and Betty and Robert sat together on the porch enjoying the broad stretch of moonlight that lay upon the ocean, Betty sighed and said, half earnestly, half jestingly, "Robert, I wish you and I were found to be related to somebody. Miss Connie is the Candors' grandchild and Primrose is Miss Connie's cousin—and Miss Connie says she is going to be her little sister. I wish I could be her little sister, too."

There was a rather embarrassed silence for a moment, and then Robert said, "Well, all your other wishes have come true, Betty. Let us hope that this one may."

Miss Connie changed the subject quickly and acted as if she had not heard, but Betty felt that she had heard and was not displeased. And, suddenly, a new bright hope began to grow in Betty's heart, the hope that some day she might truly come to be Miss Connie's little sister.

When it got so late that most of the children were sleepy, the guests took their departure.

All the people went home, singing happily, while Mother and Captain Candor and Constance and Primrose and Betty and Robert waved to them from the lighted porch.

"A wondrous success to our kind adventures!"

Robert whispered to Betty.

"And so our kind adventures are over," said Betty and sighed a little wistfully. She felt as one does who has just finished an interesting book; she was glad it had all ended happily but sorry that the story was done.

"No, little sister; they are just beginning," answered Robert. "For to friendly hearts all life

is a kind adventure."

THE END



